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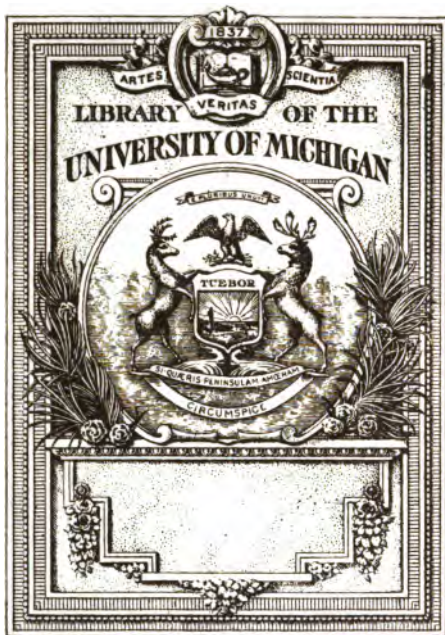
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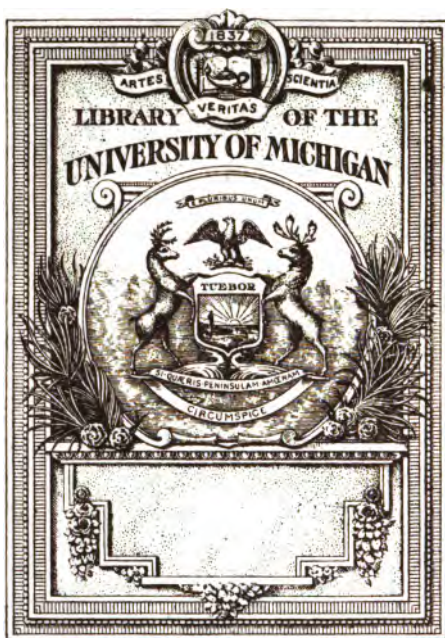




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1430  
N346







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A

COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS.







A  
COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS:

FROM

PRIMITIVE AND MEDIÆVAL WRITERS;

AND FROM THE

Various Office-books and Hymns

OF THE

ROMAN, MOZARABIC, AMBROSIAN, GALLICAN, GREEK, COPTIC,  
ARMENIAN, AND SYRIAC RITES.

BY

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VOL. III.

PSALM LXXXI. TO PSALM CXVIII.

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## A

## COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS.

## PSALM LXXXI.

**TITLE.** To the Chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of Asaph. Chaldee Targum: For praise, upon the harp brought from Gath, by the hand of Asaph. LXX.: To the end, for the presses, A Psalm of Asaph. Vulgate: To the Conqueror, [on the fifth of the Sabbath] for the presses, A Psalm of Asaph. Syriac: Of Asaph, when David was making ready by him for the festivals.

## ARGUMENT.

**ARG. THOMAS.** That we ought to sing of CHRIST with all our mind on spiritual trumpets. The Voice of the HOLY GHOST to the people. Concerning the HOLY GHOST. This Psalm relates to Pentecost, and the answer of CHRIST. Further, the Voice of the Apostles to the people. The Voice of CHRIST touching judgment to come. The Voice of the Apostles.

**VEN. BEDE.** The fifth of the Sabbath is the fifth day from the Sabbath, which is called Jove's Day by the Gentiles, and by us the fifth week-day; wherefore GOD said: *Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven*; mystically denoting that there should be born persons of various merit from the waters of Baptism. The intention, then, of the title is of this sort; *To the end*, is to signify CHRIST the LORD; *For the presses*, the Church tried by persecutors; *Asaph*, the congregation, the *fifth of the Sabbath*, Baptism. Whence we gather that the Psalm will speak of the regenerate congregation in the Church of the LORD. Hence too it is that Asaph is speaking historically to the Jews, but he is better understood spiritually by the Christian people.

In the first part of the Psalm Asaph speaketh to the faithful, that they may sound the praises of GOD on divers musical instruments for benefits many times received, *Sing ye merrily to God our strength, &c.* In the second part are the words of the LORD, threatening them against the worship of idols, that He alone may be adored Who is wont to repay: *Hear, O My people.* In the third part Asaph speaks again, rebuking unbelievers for being deceitful, though GOD's gifts have been abundantly bestowed on them. *The haters of the Lord should have been found liars, &c.*

## III.

## B

346422

Prof. - annual liars  
 P. 2. 10. 4  
 10. 1. 10. 4



EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. The calling of the Gentiles, and instruction touching the things which befell the former people.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of exhortation, and, to some extent, of command.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian.* Friday : Matins. [Corpus Christi : III. Nocturn.]

*Monastic.* Thursday : II. Noct. [Corpus Christi : II. Nocturn.]

*Parisian.* Thursday : Lauds. [Corpus Christi : III. Nocturn.]

*Lyons.* Friday : Lauds.

*Ambrosian.* Tuesday of Second Week : III. Nocturn. [Circumcision : Matins.]

*Quignon.* Wednesday : Lauds.

#### ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* Sing ye \* to GOD our strength. [Corpus Christi : The LORD fed us \* with the fatness of wheat, and with honey out of the rock did He satisfy us.]

*Monastic.* As Gregorian.

*Parisian.* Hear, \* O My people, and I will testify unto thee, I am the LORD thy GOD. [Corpus Christi : He fed them with the fatness of wheat, and with honey out of the rock did He satisfy them.]

*Lyons.* As Gregorian.

*Ambrosian.* Be merciful \* unto our sins, O LORD. [Circumcision : Thou shalt not worship any other god, I am the LORD thy GOD.]

*Mozarabic.* As Gregorian.

1 Sing we merrily unto GOD our strength : make a cheerful noise unto the GOD of Jacob.<sup>1</sup>

Agellius.

The words are in the first instance addressed by Asaph, chief precentor of the Temple, to the musicians and singers, as directions for their guidance and encouragement on the occasion of a great festival, and then they apply to the whole body of the faithful, teaching them the duty of speaking to themselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts unto the LORD. The Psalm itself forms the natural continuation of the preceding one, wherein the Church sends up her cry for the Advent of CHRIST. Now she, as it were, beholds Him coming, and making an end, and therefore calls on His true followers to abandon all worldly thoughts and cares, and to rejoice in the LORD alway. Ye, then, who heretofore have been exulting in the world your deceiver, and in the devil your deserter, and in the belly, your seducer, exult henceforth in GOD your strength. And even if your voice and powers should fail you in the loud *singing* which is GOD's due, yet, as He may be praised in many ways, *rejoice*

A.

Eph. v. 19.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Phil. iv. 4.

R.

<sup>1</sup> There is a trifling error in the | verse, corrected by all the other  
Prayer Book rendering of this | translations ; we should be ye.



(Vulg. S. Hieron.) in your inward heart, and He will accept such service with equal readiness. Further, the God in Whom you are called to rejoice is the God of *Jacob*, of the wrestler, the God of those who will strive in prayer and struggle against sin, not of the sluggard and fainthearted.

D. C.

2 Take the psalm, bring hither the tabret : the merry harp with the lute.

S. Augustine, commenting on the contrast between the Words *take* and *give*, (albeit such an opposition barely exists in the Hebrew), explains the first clause of this verse as an allegory of the mutual relations between a Christian teacher and his flock. The hearers are to *take the psalm*, to receive the living, oral instruction from his mouth ; and in their turn, they are to *bring the tabret*, or rather, *kettle-drum*, which, being made of the skin of a dead animal, denotes carnal things ; that is, they are to minister to their teacher's bodily needs, according to that saying of the Apostle : " If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things ? " S. Bruno works out this idea more deeply. *Take* from God Himself that *psalm*, which of yourselves you cannot have, the quickening spirit of innocence and holiness which comes of His mercy alone. *Give* Him the *tabret*, that is, mortification of your flesh by fasts and vigils, typified by the slain beast whose skin produces the sound. Cardinal Hugo sums up the reasons why the drum is a type of bodily mortification, in his usual fashion, with a distich :

A.

1 Cor. ix. 11.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

Origen.

S. Greg. M.  
Mor. 33.

Hugo Card.

Terret aves, tenuis, fragilis, cava, mortua, lenis,  
Tensa, cutis, lignis, verbere, sicca, sonans.

Slender, frail, hollow, dead, smooth, scaring birds,  
Strained skin and wood, dry, sounding with a blow.

They are more nearly agreed in explaining the latter clause ; *the pleasant psaltery with the harp*. (Vulg. LXX.) The psaltery, observes S. Augustine, differs from the harp in having its sounding-board above the strings, which we strike from below ; whereas the sounding-board of the harp is lower than the strings. The first, then, means the preaching of God's Word, and is thus described as *pleasant*, while the latter denotes our good works done on earth, necessary to fulfil that pleasantness. And in this wise the divinely quickened human spirit is, as it were, the psaltery made vocal with God's psalm, and thus pleasant to Him, while the lowliness wherewith He is obeyed is shadowed by the harp, sounding from below. Ayguan gives a slightly different turn to the thought, by pointing out that the psaltery or decachord, with its ten strings struck by the hand, is a type of the Ten Commandments carried out in action.

A.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

Ay.



### 3 Blow up the trumpet in the new-moon : even in the time appointed, and upon our solemn feast day.

- There has been much discussion among modern critics, as to the special festival referred to here. Some, dwelling on the allusion, later in the Psalm, to the Exodus, will have it that the Passover is meant. But there seems no adequate reason for departing from the Chaldee, which expressly names the new moon of the month Tizri, the first day of the Jewish civil year, as it also was of the Sabbatical year, and of the year of jubilee, although occurring in the seventh month of the ordinary ecclesiastical computation. This day is particularly described in the Law as a "day of blowing the trumpets," a ceremony which formed no part of the Paschal feast, and the Jews, always singularly tenacious of ancient tradition, still actually use the present Psalm in the office of this day. The solemnities of the seventh month did not end, however, with the Feast of Trumpets. The tenth day was the great Day of Atonement, when the most august of the Mosaic sacrifices took place, and on the fifteenth day (that of the *full moon* [*medio mense*, S. Hieron.] held by the best critics to be the true rendering of *יָדֵי*, not *time appointed*), came the chiefest festival of the Law, the Feast of Tabernacles, which is *the solemn feast-day* of the Psalm, and is described as *the* feast in more than one place in Scripture. It was the greatest festival, because it denoted the perfect rest of the Land of Promise, (whereas the Passover indicated merely the escape from the house of bondage, and the first setting out in quest of Canaan,) thus typifying for Christians the eternal peace of Heaven, won by the bloodshedding of the Lamb of God. Reasons have been sought for the special significance of trumpets at the great festival, and two in particular are dwelt on by Jewish writers. One, that trumpets of horn were used in memory of the oblation of Isaac, when the substituted ram was caught by his horns in a thicket;<sup>1</sup> the other, that the giving of the Law is commemorated, as we read, "When the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice." So again, the Divine utterance is similarly described in the Apocalypse: "I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega." And thrice the trumpet-sound is mentioned, by the Lord Himself and His Apostle, as the signal of the second Advent to Judgment.
- De Wette. to the special festival referred to here. Some, dwelling on the allusion, later in the Psalm, to the Exodus, will have it that the Passover is meant. But there seems no adequate reason for departing from the Chaldee, which expressly names the new moon of the month Tizri, the first day of the Jewish civil year, as it also was of the Sabbatical year, and of the year of jubilee, although occurring in the seventh month of the ordinary ecclesiastical computation. This day is particularly described in the Law as a "day of blowing the trumpets," a ceremony which formed no part of the Paschal feast, and the Jews, always singularly tenacious of ancient tradition, still actually use the present Psalm in the office of this day. The solemnities of the seventh month did not end, however, with the Feast of Trumpets. The tenth day was the great Day of Atonement, when the most august of the Mosaic sacrifices took place, and on the fifteenth day (that of the *full moon* [*medio mense*, S. Hieron.] held by the best critics to be the true rendering of *יָדֵי*, not *time appointed*), came the chiefest festival of the Law, the Feast of Tabernacles, which is *the solemn feast-day* of the Psalm, and is described as *the* feast in more than one place in Scripture. It was the greatest festival, because it denoted the perfect rest of the Land of Promise, (whereas the Passover indicated merely the escape from the house of bondage, and the first setting out in quest of Canaan,) thus typifying for Christians the eternal peace of Heaven, won by the bloodshedding of the Lamb of God. Reasons have been sought for the special significance of trumpets at the great festival, and two in particular are dwelt on by Jewish writers. One, that trumpets of horn were used in memory of the oblation of Isaac, when the substituted ram was caught by his horns in a thicket;<sup>1</sup> the other, that the giving of the Law is commemorated, as we read, "When the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice." So again, the Divine utterance is similarly described in the Apocalypse: "I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega." And thrice the trumpet-sound is mentioned, by the Lord Himself and His Apostle, as the signal of the second Advent to Judgment.
- Hengstenberg. Targum. Numb. xxix. 1. Hupfeld. Kampfhausen. 1 Kings xii. 32. Ezek. xlv. 25. 2 Chron. v. 3. Neh. viii. 14. Honorius. Titelman. Gen. xxii. 13. Exod. xix. 19. Rev. i. 10. S. Matt. xxiv. 31. 1 Cor. xv. 52. 1 Thess. iv. 16.

A favourite exposition, then, of this verse with the early

<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted that the word for *trumpet* in this verse is *קֶרֶן*, the curving horn or *κερα-τὶν*, as S. Jerome explains it,

distinguished from the straight tube or *σαλpinx*, *τρυβίς*, which is the term applied to the silver trumpets of the convocation.



commentators, is that it is a call to loud proclamation of the Gospel (according to the saying, "Lift up thy voice like a trumpet") in the new life which CHRIST has given us, a life not without its anxieties and changes here, and thus aptly denoted by the *moon*. Or, as another yet more beautifully takes it, the *new moon* is the Church, enlightened by CHRIST her true Sun. In this the trumpet-call of preachers began, on our *solemn feast day* of the Resurrection, the renewal of our creation, and yet again, still louder, when the fiery tongues of Pentecost came down. And then we may take it by anagoge, of that great rejoicing which shall be at the consummation of all things, when the Archangel himself will sound the trumpet, when a new heaven appears, when the Feasts of Tabernacles and of Dedication shall be united in one, what time the great Voice shall say, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." And, coming to the individual soul, we are well reminded that the two silver trumpets of the Jewish camp called the people to banquets, to battles, and to sacred festivals, and that in like manner the preaching of the Gospel calls believers to the Holy Eucharist, to resistance against temptation and sin, and to the unending bliss of heaven. Not merely by the mouth of the priesthood, but by that of every believer who has seen a new light rest on his soul, who has kept the solemn feast-day of the indwelling of the HOLY GHOST within him, and who may well say, "O come hither, and hearken, all ye that fear God; and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul."

A.  
Isa. lviii. 1.  
Ay.

Honorius.  
Z.

S. Cyril.  
Alex. in  
Joel. iii.

Rev. xxi. 3.

Hugo Card.

D. C.  
Ps. lxxvi. 14.

4 For this was made a statute for Israel : and a law of the God of Jacob.

For the word *חֻקִּים*, *law*, the LXX. and Vulgate more literally read *judgment*, which draws the following comment from S. Augustine: Where there is a *statute*, there is *judgment*. For they who sinned under the Law shall be judged by the Law. And the LORD CHRIST, WORD made flesh, is the Giver of the statute, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind." Thus we are warned that the Lawgiver and the Judge are one, and that the commands He lays upon us are not merely subject of meditation for Israel, the contemplative saints, but for practical operation by Jacob, the saints of active life, and as the final test for all at the Doom. In the literal sense, the clause reminds the hearers that no new rule, nor one of human invention, is being laid down, but that a Divine and ancient precept is enforced, when all people are called on to make God's promises known.

A.

S. John ix.  
39.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

Ric. Hamp.

Agellius.



5 This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony : when he came out of the land of Egypt, and had heard a strange language.

There is more than one difficulty in this verse, although its apparent meaning is obvious here and in all the principal versions. The sense on the surface, as taken by the majority of ancient commentators, and not a few modern ones, refers to the Exodus, and the intercourse with foreign nations which followed on it. But the Chaldee paraphrast, R. Kimchi, and the best recent critics, understand it otherwise. The first explains the whole passage of the patriarch Joseph, not of the Jewish nation (especially the powerful tribe of Ephraim, as represented by him); and paraphrases thus: "He laid a testimony upon Joseph, that he should not draw nigh unto his master's wife, in the day when he went out of the house of bondage, and ruled over the whole land of Egypt," on the anniversary, as a Rabbinical tradition alleges, of Isaac's deliverance. And this fits in with the words of Gen. xli. 45, "Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt." R. Kimchi, followed by some eminent moderns, takes the second clause thus: *When God went out against the land of Egypt*, for the slaughter of the first-born, as it is written, "About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt." Further, the last clause of the verse in the Hebrew is in the first person, not (as the previous one), in the third, and runs, *I heard the voice of one unknown*. This would present no difficulty, were it not that in the immediately following verse the first person recurs, personifying GOD Himself, Who cannot be meant as the speaker of these particular words. The passage is thus a very difficult one, and is variously explained, either as spoken in the person of Israel dwelling amongst the alien Egyptians, for whom they needed an interpreter; or, again, as referring to the Divine voice made known in the plains of Egypt and afterwards heard from Sinai; or, lastly, that it is a sudden exclamation of the Psalmist, announcing his reception of the oracle of GOD, given in the succeeding verses, according to the analogy of the vision of Eliphaz the Temanite. Turning now to the mystical exposition, let us hear S. Augustine: *Joseph* is interpreted *increase*. And as Joseph was sold into Egypt, so CHRIST cometh to the Gentiles. Joseph was exalted there after his troubles, and CHRIST is glorified with us after the passion of the Martyrs. The Gentiles, then, belong to our true Joseph, and are fitly styled *increase*, because "the children of the desolate are many more than of her which hath an husband." The *testimony of Joseph* coming out of Egypt, means the vow of those who pass through the Red sea of Baptism, ruddy with the Blood of CHRIST, and are thus freed from those sins, their enemies, which would soon destroy

Targum.

Ay.  
R. Kimchi.  
De Muis.  
Hupfeld.  
Rosenmüller.  
Exod. xi. 4.

R. Kimchi.  
Rosenmüller.  
Hupfeld.  
L. de Dieu.  
De Wette.  
Delitzsch.  
Job iv. 16.

A.

Isa. ltv. 1.



them. On the other side of that flood, the Catechumens will learn mysteries now hidden from them, and will *hear a tongue which they know not*, the precepts of the New Testament, delivered, literally, in a language differing from that of the Law. Cardinal Hugo most beautifully reminds us that Joseph himself never left Egypt alive, but that only his bones were carried up into the Land of Promise, whence this verse may well be taken of the Martyrs, who despise the life of this world, and dying to it, pass to their true country, there to learn the Unknown Song. Yet another reminds us of the great increase of the Church on that first Day of Pentecost, when the Apostles were heard speaking in unknown tongues, according to the exact dialect of each hearer in the crowd.

C.

Hugo Card.

L.

6 I eased his shoulder from the burden : and his hands were delivered from making the pots.

Here the Voice of GOD Himself declares His benefits towards His people. But this direct address is lost in the LXX. and Vulgate, which read, *He removed his back from the burdens*. The sense is the same, and we are well reminded by the Doctor of Grace that none can do this thing save He Who saith, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" Who alone takes the grievous load of sin away from those who seek His aid. In the second clause the LXX. and Vulgate read, *His hands served in the basket*; doubtless the baskets of osier or of palm-leaves still used in Egypt for carrying loads, and employed like the hod of European bricklayers, and also for carrying manure to the fields. The term thus embraces all servile labour, from which CHRIST sets us free. And the basket will then be an emblem of the despised and lowly in this world, whom the LORD nevertheless fills with the fragments of His Flesh; and when He chose His twelve humble Apostles, He then filled twelve baskets with good things from His own table. Further, as baskets are used for carrying away the accumulated dust and filth of houses, so those who are still living in sin are said to have their hands toiling in baskets, which toil ends when CHRIST delivers them from that bondage. And if we keep to the idea of the building labour imposed on the Hebrews, we shall remember that sinners, while in the darkness of Egypt, are busily engaged in rearing up the walls of the mystical Babylon, contrary to that prayer of the Church, "Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem." There are some who take the latter clause of the verse in a good sense, as the occupation to which the ransomed slaves voluntarily turned, and thus one reminds us that spiritual persons, busied in hearing confession, toil in the baskets, by cleansing the hearts of sinners from defilement: while another will have it that the basket is a type of charity, because

A.

S. Matt. xi. 29.

A.

C.

Honorius.

Ps. li. 18.

Hugo Card.

Ric. Hamp.



Agellius.  
Quesnel.

it contains and embraces many things, and those whom God sets free must needs toil therein to please Him. But these interpretations will not stand with the literal sense of the passage. More to the point is the remark that this verse gives the reason for the sounding of trumpets, the warrior instrument, forbidden to slaves. As freemen and warriors, the Hebrews were at liberty to sound it, and its notes therefore fitly ushered in the year of Jubilee, when all debts were cancelled and all bondmen were released.

7 Thou calledst upon me in troubles, and I delivered thee : and heard thee what time as the storm fell upon thee.

S. Chrysost.  
Hom. 3 sup.  
Matt.  
In Ps. xxii.

Observe how *troubles* are the necessary forerunners of deliverance, for, as a great Saint teaches us, a grain of wheat shut up in the husk, cannot come out till it is ground, and so man can scarcely be set free from worldly difficulties, which, like husks, entangle him, unless he be chastened with some trouble. Not a light one either, for, as S. Augustine says very well, When you are under medical treatment, and feel the fire and steel, you cry out, but the surgeon does not listen to your wishes, he heeds only your cure. It is thus, then, that God hears us in trouble and delivers us, for He Himself sends the trouble as the very means to make us call on Him and thus gain our safety. And in this sense one, at whose feet tens of thousands have been glad to sit, tells us, "When any tribulation comes on thee, then CHRIST meets thee with His Cross, and shows thee the way to the kingdom of heaven, whither thou oughtest to go." Therefore the time of trouble is the time of life, according to the pithy Jewish proverb, "When Israel is in the brick-kiln, then comes Moses."

S. Thomas  
& Kempis.  
Serm. 20, ad  
Novit.

L.  
Agellius.  
Exod. xiv.  
24.

Targum.

A.  
Haymo.

Hugo Card.

*What time as the storm fell on thee.* The A. V. correctly, and nearly in accord with the LXX. and Vulgate, reads, *I answered thee in the secret place of thunder.* That is, as they diversely take it, either in the actual passage of the Red Sea, when God looked out of the pillar of cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, or when He spoke to Israel out of the thick darkness amidst thunders from Sinai. And this latter is the Chaldee view, for the paraphrase runs, "I heard thee in the hidden place of the house of My majesty, when the fiery wheels sounded before Me." God hears us too in the *secret place of tempest*, when storms of temptation and trial are raging within our hearts, and the waves of sin appear likely to wash over us. Some take the clause as though it meant *in a place hidden from the storm*,<sup>1</sup> and then tell us of the calm which reigned in the souls of the Martyrs, while the fiercest whirlwinds of heathen rage broke upon their bodies.

<sup>1</sup> This is the sense of the word פקק in Isaiah xxxii. 2, פקק, "a covert from the tempest."



## 8 I proved thee also : at the waters of strife.

The literal reference is to the murmuring of the people in Kadesh, when Moses had to bring water for them out of the rock, and in the double name given to the scene we find the two members of the verse, *Massa* telling that Israel was *proved*, and *Meribah* that the test ended in *strife*. For *strife*, the LXX. and Vulgate read *contradiction* or *gainsaying*. And this is mystically explained in three ways. It is taken of the waters of Baptism, in which Christians are called on to renounce and gainsay all evil, and thereby to be in their turn contradicted by unbelievers; of the trials of the Church by the gainsaying of heathen persecutors without or heretical teachers within, necessary for the *proving* of the Saints; or, most deeply of all, that it is uttered of Him Who was a sign to be spoken against, Who stretched out His hands all day upon the Cross to a disobedient and gainsaying people, Who suffered the stream of water and blood to flow from His pierced side when He proved His nation, and was answered with strife. And yet again, as another teaches us, the billows of passion and bitter thoughts which well in our hearts, are waters of strife, which only CHRIST can lull and calm, by treading them under His feet, as He comes to us in the darkness.

Exod. xvii.  
Numb. xx.S. Bruno  
Carth.

P.

C.

A.  
S. Luke ii.  
34.S. Ambros.  
pref. in Ps.  
xlv.

9 Hear, O my people, and I will assure thee, O Israel : if thou wilt hearken unto me,

10 There shall no strange god be in thee : neither shalt thou worship any other god.

Lorinus dwells at some length on the prominence which even Pagan religions gave to this precept, by discouraging the worship of alien deities, and aptly cites, amidst a crowd of other testimonies, that Law of the Twelve Tables: "Let them not worship foreign gods. Let no one have gods apart, nor new ones. Let them not even privately worship gods brought from abroad, unless invited by the State; and let them worship those which have always been held celestial." But the particular turn given by the LXX., Vulgate, and Arabic versions to the word *strange*, which they render *new, recent*, (a sense which the word does admit in Isaiah xxviii. 21.) gives occasion to much comment, justified in its scope by the parallel passage in the Song of Moses: "They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not." A new god, notes S. Augustine, is one made in time; but our GOD is not new, for He is from eternity to eternity. And our CHRIST may be new as Man, but everlasting as GOD. For what is there before the beginning?

L.

Deut. xxxii.  
17.

A.



- And yet "in the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with GOD, and the WORD was GOD." And He, our CHRIST, is the WORD made flesh, that He might dwell amongst us. Heathen idols are costly, are of silver and gold, precious and shining, but they are new, fresh out of a workshop. The Arian Christ is new, for he exists only in time, and is posterior to the FATHER. The god of the Manichees is new, for he is an unsuccessful struggler against the powers of darkness and corruption, and not the Almighty, the Uncreated Light, the perfectly Holy. Christians, too, may err in the same spirit, though not in the same way, by making idols of their appetites, their sins, or even of any of God's temporal gifts. And as none of these, for the most part, holds its worshipper long faithful, so the act of change from one to another sets up a *new* god on the deposition of the old. Yet again, it may be fitly taken of new heresies, alien from the Catholic faith, which result, sooner or later, in leading their followers away from God. And it is in warning of the deep spiritual blessing of cleaving to Him, that He says *I will assure thee*, or as the A. V. more forcibly and exactly, with LXX. and Vulgate, turns it, *I will testify unto thee*: that is, I will solemnly pledge the fulfilment of My promises, swearing by Myself. And so runs a similar passage of Holy Writ: "The Angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also judge My house." And what that means, we may learn from yet another place: "Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
- S. John 1. 1.
- S. Bruno Carth.
- Lu.
- L.
- Honorius.
- Hugo Card.
- Zech. iii. 6.
- S. Matt. xix. 28.

11 I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt : open thy mouth wide, and I shall fill it.

- Literally, it is spoken of the miraculous food for those who had left behind them the flesh-pots of Egypt and gone out into the wilderness at the voice of God. Spiritually, they tell us that it is spoken of the soul rather than of the body. I Myself, thy LORD and God, have brought thee out of the darkness and bondage of thy sins, *open thou thy mouth wide*, as the young of a bird open their beaks to receive the food their parents bring them, and *I shall fill it* with good things. Open it *wide*, by breaking down the vain idols within thine heart, which cramp and narrow thee, and give thyself room to love and praise Me. Open it *wide*, by preaching the Gospel loudly and clearly, by warning sinners plainly, by praising God worthily, and I will fill thee with all spiritual
- Honorius.
- A.



grace. And thus we see the meaning of those words of the Apostle, "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. . . . Be ye also enlarged, be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." *I will fill it*, not merely with grace, but with Myself. For, as S. Augustine most deeply says, "A soul which is capable of containing God, nothing less than God can fill." Wherefore He gives Himself as our Food in the Holy Sacrament, and truly is it said of the Christian mouth which has fed upon such dainties, "Full of grace are thy lips, because God hath blessed thee for ever." He bids us open our mouths wide in yet another way, by asking boldly in prayer for whatever we need, assuring us that the greater and more aspiring are our petitions, the more abundantly shall they be fulfilled. We have, further, in this verse, two things to note particularly. First, the easiness of God's conditions; for there is nothing less troublesome than opening the mouth. He does not say, "Stretch out thy hands to labour, and I will fill them," but only, *Open thy mouth wide*. Next, the lavishness of God's promise. He does not say, "Open thy mouth, and I will put somewhat therein, and will not suffer it to be empty," but *I will fill it*, however widely thou mayest open it, doing far beyond all thou canst ever hope for. And so the Apostle confesses, saying, "Unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, unto Him be glory in the Church by CHRIST JESUS throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." What, then, asks Richard of S. Victor, is this *mouth* of the inner man, save the heart's longing? But all the dainties of Egypt cannot fill this mouth, for all the riches of the world are not enough to content carnal desire. See how small a part of the human body the fleshly mouth is, and what a narrow opening. Who can fail to see that it is so small that one morsel of bread is enough to fill it? But the whole world is not so much to the desire of the heart, as the morsel of bread is to the bodily mouth, for the one does fill, but the other does not. And thus we come back to that saying of S. Augustine, that nothing save God Himself can satisfy our craving. So it is quaintly expressed by an old writer:

The whole round world is not enough to fill  
The heart's three corners, but it craveth still;  
Only the Trinity, that made it, can  
Suffice the vast triangled heart of man.

Francis  
Quarles.  
*School of the  
Heart.*  
Epigr. 10.

But observe, that the words are spoken only to those who have come out of the land of Egypt. While they remain in darkness, they cannot see the food offered to their lips, till they hearken to the Wise Man, "Open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread." While we continue in sin, we

L.  
Philip de la  
Grève.  
Serm. 180.  
Prov. xx. 13.



cannot avail ourselves of the promise, but when we once fight against the foes of our souls, we can say with Hannah, "My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies, because I rejoice in Thy salvation."

12 But my people would not hear my voice : and Israel would not obey me.

13 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts : and let them follow their own imaginations.

It is not only disobedience, but ingratitude which God charges on His rebellious people. Servants and slaves count it an honour when their masters deign to converse familiarly with them, but Israel, mere dust and ashes, stops his ears against the voice of the God of all gods. Not once only, as the Rabbins point out, but in the wilderness, in the days of the Judges, in the times of the kings after David and Solomon, until they were driven into exile and their temples burnt, they would not hear. Observe, too, that as the charge seems brought especially against the house of Joseph, so it was the tribe of Ephraim which formed the mainstay of the idolatrous northern kingdom, after the rebellion against Rehoboam. But the words are still more forcibly applied to the rejection of CHRIST by the Jews. Beforetime, they had stopped their ears against the voices of the Prophets, they had beaten and slain the messengers of the LORD of the vineyard, but now their cry was, "This is the heir, come, let us kill Him." Nor are they alone in their sin. Again and again He is rejected still by His people, those whom He purchased with His own Blood. He stands at the door and knocks, saying, "Open, O man, recognize the voice of the LORD thy God ; I will that thou open for Me to enter, and thou wilt not. Evil is that servant who will not shelter his Master."

*So I gave them up to their own hearts' lusts.* The apertures of the "press" are now opened, to let the dregs and lees fall out, that they may be cast away. For *I gave them up*, the LXX. and Vulgate, with little difference of meaning, read *I sent them away*, loosing, as it were, the reins which held them in check, and suffering them to run riot at their will. And this appears more than once in Holy Writ as the sternest of God's earthly judgments. "I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery," is the warning spoken by the Prophet, and the Apostle confirms him, adding "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." Wherefore is added, *I let them follow their own imaginations*, or, as the LXX. and Vulgate read, Bellarmine. *They will go in their own inventions or desires ; thereby heap-*



ing up fresh indignation for themselves, by adding sin upon sin to their previous wickedness.

14 O that my people would have hearkened unto me : for if Israel had walked in my ways,

15 I should soon have put down their enemies : and turned my hand against their adversaries.

Lorinus points out how the wording of these verses asserts the freedom of the human will, as the only other explanation possible is to charge God with ignorance of the future, and although his argument is to a great extent based on the word *perhaps*, which the Vulgate inserts in verse 15, yet the meaning he enforces is sufficiently borne out by the actual text. And S. Augustine wisely teaches us that the words also make against false excuses. Israel might say, I sin, it is true, but not willingly, rather by reason of compulsion from the devil it is that I follow my own imaginations. But if Israel would but hear the voice of the LORD, He would soon put down all such spiritual enemies, and give us the victory. Observe further, that the two clauses of the former verse are not mere repetition, but denote two distinct stages of obedience. Hearing the word, without walking in its ways, is of no use. Herod listened gladly to John Baptist, but obeyed the daughter of Herodias rather than him. Felix communed often with Paul during two years, but though trembling at the Apostle's reasoning as to righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, yet took not on him at last the Gospel yoke.

*I should soon have put down their enemies.* For soon, the LXX. reads, *In the nothing*, the Vulgate, not very differently, *for nothing* (*pro nihilo*). That is, as they variously explain it, (and first rightly) as a very easy thing ; or else, *unto nothing*, by utterly destroying them ; or yet again, *freely*, that is, without any merit or price on the part of Israel as a reason for having God as its champion, in contrast, as is well pointed out, to the great trouble and outlay in hiring allies and buying off invaders, which the Jews were compelled to be at when left to their own devices on several occasions in their history. *And turned My hand against their adversaries.* They take the Hand of God, for the most part, as denoting merely His power. One special force is, however, given to it, by interpreting it of the LORD JESUS. The words will then point to His offer to the Jews of the headship over the nations, not only during His own three years of preaching, but by the voice of His Apostles for nearly forty more ; until, on their final refusal to hear, the Romans were suffered to take away their place and nation, and the kingdom of the Church was transferred to the Gentiles.

16 The haters of the LORD should have been found liars : but their time should have endured for ever.

L.

A.

Ay.

Acts xxiv.  
26.

Hugo Card.

Titelman.

P.



Hupfeld.  
Kampf-  
hausen.  
Rosen-  
müller.

C.

A.

R. Ishaki.  
R. Aben-  
Ezra.  
Hupfeld.

R. Kimchi.  
De Wette.

L.  
P.

The first clause ought to run, *The haters of the Lord should have lied unto him*, that is, unto Israel; crouching before the chosen people with unwilling and hypocritical submission, and denying all intention of war or resistance. But the LXX. and Vulgate reading, *The enemies of the Lord have lied unto Him*, is explained differently from this. It is, writes one of the earlier commentators, spoken of false believers, not of the heathen, who cannot be said to lie to God, inasmuch as they have given Him no pledges, but the unfaithful, who have broken their promises, shall be cast into hell, where *their time shall endure for ever*. And that because they take up again those things which they renounced in baptism; the world, the flesh, and the devil, so that their last end is worse than the first. This interpretation squares in the latter clause with the view of some Rabbins and modern critics that the whole verse refers to God's enemies, and that the time of their punishment is unending, in that no restoration will be vouchsafed them. But others take it as the Prayer Book version, and as contrasting the enduring prosperity of God's people with the sufferings of their adversaries. And then we may explain it, as not a few do, of the lying of the Jews in promising obedience to the Messiah, and yet denying Him when He came, so as to be rejected, and their dispensation brought to a close, while that of the Gospel endures for ever, not only to the end of the world, but through the ages of eternity.

17 He should have fed them also with the finest wheat-flour: and with honey out of the stony rock should I have satisfied thee.

Titelman.

Bochart,  
Hierozo.

Bellarmino.

Ay.

A.

S. Thomas  
Aquinas.  
De Ven. Sac.  
Opusc. 58,  
cap. xxxii.

The literal reference is to the produce of Canaan, to its rich harvests of corn, and to the honey made by the wild bees in the clefts of the rocks, which serve them as hives; though some are found to refer the words as they run in the LXX. and Vulgate, *He fed them with the fat of wheat and satisfied them with honey out of the rock*, to the manna in the wilderness and the sweet water brought forth by the stroke of Moses' rod. But, save for a glance at one meaning of *honey* as denoting the sweetness of Divine wisdom, the expositors all agree in taking this verse mystically of the Blessed Sacrament, the fine wheat-offering and sweet banquet of all believing souls, springing in both kinds from the Rock, which is CHRIST. So the Angelic Doctor: "As the Rock signifieth the incorruptible Body of CHRIST, so the honey from the Rock is the sweet Blood of CHRIST, which the faithful suck in from CHRIST's Body."

Wherefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, our Strength; glory be to the SON, Who feeds us with the fatness of wheat; Glory be to



the HOLY GHOST, Who fills our mouth with a merry song unto the God of Jacob.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

## COLLECTS.

Open, O LORD, the mouths of Thy humble servants to show forth Thy praise, that leaving the works of Egypt behind, we may rejoice in the confession of Thy Name. (1.)

Unto Thee, O LORD, our Strength, we pray with the cheerful noise of faith and hope, that our petition, poured forth in trouble, may draw nigh unto Thine ears: that Thou mayest in Thy goodness be present with the prayers of each one of us to deliver us; and when Thou hast rescued us, grant us a burning desire to attain unto Thee, and with harmonious devotion to sing aloud to the Unity of the threefold Majesty, so that, alway busied in Thy praise, and following the paths of Thy commandments, we may obtain in Thee the adornments of exultation, the comforts of life, and the crown of faith. (11.)

Let us sing merrily unto Thee, O LORD, Whom we acknowledge and confess to be our Strength; for which cause we take a cheerful noise unto Thee in our longings, a psalm in our teaching, we give back a drum in our mortification; for in praising Thee we keep festival and take delight in making mention of Thy wondrous works. Grant, therefore, O LORD, that we who tell of Thy bounties may also win Thy rewards. (11.)

O LORD, cause Thy people to hear Thy voice, open our mouth, and fill it with the praise of Thy grace, that in the trouble of this present life Thou mayest hearken when we call upon Thee, and Thou mayest deliver us from every assault of our enemies and from the storm which endeth not. (1.)

## PSALM LXXXII.

TITLE. A Psalm of Asaph. Syriac: Of Asaph, an invective against the ungodly Jews.

## ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST is to be acknowledged as alone Almighty in the midst of the Gods. The Voice of the Church to the Jews. The Voice of the HOLY GHOST by the Prophet to the princes. And the Voice of the Church concerning the Jews and her own evil rulers. The Voice of the HOLY GHOST to the people.



They are blamed who turn aside to evil and feign themselves judges among disputants. When he goeth in unto the strangers.

VEN. BEDE. *Asaph* denotes the Synagogue, which attained to behold the LORD the SAVIOUR in bodily presence. *Asaph* speaks throughout the Psalm against the Jews, concerning the Advent of CHRIST; in the first portion, warning them that the LORD had taken His stand in the midst of them; and therefore that they ought not to admit the fellowship of sinners. *God standeth in the congregation of princes.* In the second part, he warns them to understand that He, Who in the flesh He took on Him seemed poor and needy, is very CHRIST. *Defend the poor and fatherless.* In the third part he says, that they were honoured so as to become sons of GOD, but that by their own sin they had fallen into the snares of death. *I said, Ye are Gods, &c.*

EUSEBIUS OF CESAREA. A rebuke of the princes of the Jewish nation, and a prophecy concerning the Gentiles.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm inflicting shame.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian.* Friday: Matins.

*Monastic.* Thursday: II. Nocturn.

*Parisian.* Wednesday: Nones.

*Lyons.* Saturday: Terce.

*Ambrosian.* Wednesday of Second Week: I. Nocturn.

*Quignon.* Wednesday: Nones.

#### ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* As preceding Psalm.

*Monastic.* Thou only \* art the most Highest over all the earth.

*Parisian.* The LORD is my refuge \* and my GOD is the strength of my confidence.

*Ambrosian.* Thou shalt inherit \* among all nations.

*Mozarabic.* Judge the poor and fatherless, \* justify the lowly and needy.

1 God standeth in the congregation of princes :  
he is a Judge among gods.

*Of princes.* The literal Hebrew, followed by all the principal versions (except the Syriac, which has *of Angels*, and Aquila, who agrees with this and A. V., reading *ἰερέων*) is *of gods*. And hereupon is a division of opinion. One view, mainly confined to a few modern critics, follows the Syriac, identifies *Gods* with *Angels*, and supposes the object of the Psalm to be a rebuke for negligence of duty administered in heaven to those ministering spirits who, as we read in the Book of Daniel, are set over kingdoms and nations. The other, which is that of the Chaldee Targum, the Fathers in general, and most critics, sees a reference to earthly officers alone, (as we find in another place, "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people,") and, as S. Augustine points out, primarily to the *synagogue of gods*, (LXX. and Vulgate)

Bleek.  
Rosenm.  
Hupfeld.

Dan. x. 13,  
20.

Exod. xxii.  
28. Margin,  
*judges.*

A.



or whole people of Israel, as God's Son and chosen nation, Exod. iv. 22. and therefore higher than other tribes of the earth; and then to the Christian Church as the successor to the privileges of Jacob. And God the Son did in truth stand incarnate amidst the Jewish synagogue and the Christian Church, according to that saying of the Baptist, "There standeth One among you, Whom ye know not." He is said to *stand*, because of His immutability, His power, His abiding presence, and also because of His promptness in act, to decide for the right, and to help the poor, as He did S. Stephen. But one commentator draws a yet deeper lesson from the word *stand*. He reminds us that it is for the judge to sit, and for the litigants or accused to stand; as it is written, "Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning until the evening." It is then a solemn warning for judges to remember, that whatever cause is before them is God's cause, since right and wrong are at stake in it, and that by acquitting the guilty, or condemning the innocent, they pass sentence against God Himself. And the synagogue of the Chief Priests, scribes, and Pharisees did in very deed so condemn God Himself, when He stood in the midst of them in human form. *He is a judge among gods.* Or, as the LXX. and Vulgate read, *He judgeth the gods in the midst.* That is, in the literal sense, He reviews the sentences of inferior judges, who are but His vicars, and will openly condemn them at the Doom for any false judgment they may have given on earth. But the version which S. Augustine and Cassiodorus had before them reads, *He discerneth the Gods in the midst.* That is, as one will have it, CHRIST stands between the Prophets of the Old Testament, who foreshowed Him, and the Apostles of the New, who preached Him, being Himself the dividing and yet uniting link betwixt them. Or again, He *discerns*, by selecting, His Apostles and Evangelists and all His Saints, from a guilty world, and leading them to the kingdom of heaven. In heaven itself He discerns too, by distributing rewards to each Saint according to his merit, appointing them their several grades of blessedness. There is another rendering of the first clause, adopted by some, *God standeth in the congregation of God.* And then we may fitly take it as no pleonasm, nor yet as denoting the presence of the Most High among His people on earth, but the exaltation of the Man CHRIST JESUS, as God in heaven, in the presence of the Eternal FATHER, in the midst of the assembly of the Saints triumphant, for "lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain."

A striking illustration of the whole verse is afforded by that custom of the ancient Councils, still adhered to by the Holy Eastern Church in all solemn assemblies, of placing the Book of the Gospels in their midst, as a symbol of the unseen presence of CHRIST. And when accusations against some Bishops

C.

S. John i. 26.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Leblanc.  
Agellius.Exod. xviii.  
13.

Z.

Agellius.

Honorius.

C.

S. Greg.  
Naz. Orat. 2  
de Bapt.

Cocceius.

Rev. v. 6.

S. Cyril.  
Alex. Epist.  
Synod.



were offered to Constantine the Great at the Council of Nice, he tore them up, saying, "Ye have been given as gods to us by God, and it is not fitting that a man should judge gods, but only He of Whom it is written, *God standeth in the synagogue of the gods, He is a judge among gods.*"

2 How long will ye give wrong judgment : and accept the persons of the ungodly ?

A.

*How long.* For already, throughout your history, ye have resisted, outraged, and slain the servants of the LORD of the vineyard, the prophets of God. Will you carry on your rebellion and false judgment against His Son, and lay murderous hands upon the Heir, though He be very God? *And accept the persons of the ungodly,* saying, on the one hand, "Not this Man, but Barabbas," and on the other, "We have no king but Cæsar." Several of the Latin commentators dwell on the wording of the Vulgate in the latter clause of the verse, *take the faces of sinners*, and explain it as a rebuke for imitating the wicked, whether the evil Jews of old time who slew the prophets, or the yet more evil chief priests who conspired against CHRIST. In this sense they urge that the first half of the verse refers to those rulers who actually condemned the LORD, and the latter to the multitude which might easily have rescued Him, but preferred to follow the lead of His powerful enemies. Cardinal Hugo dwells on the application of the words to unfaithful prelates in the Christian Church, who fall into that old worst sin of the house of Levi, and "have been partial in the law," not bearing in mind the Wise Man's counsel : "Seek not to be judge, being not able to take away iniquity ; lest at any time thou fear the person of the mighty, and lay a stumbling-block in the way of thine uprightness."

Honorius.

S. John

xviii. 40 ;

xix. 15.

C.

The Gloss.

Ay.

Hugo Card.

Pseudo-

Hieron.

Mal. ii. 9.

L.

Ecclus. vii.

6.

3 Defend the poor and fatherless : see that such as are in need and necessity have right.

4 Deliver the out-cast and poor : save them from the hand of the ungodly.

A.

These words are, they tell us, an appeal to the Jewish people to deliver Him Who became *poor and needy* for their sakes out of the hands of His cruel enemies, and to save Him from a painful and unmerited death. But a few hours before, and "the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill Him ; for they feared the people," and now that the crisis had come, the people proved to be "dumb dogs, that cannot bark," when the wolves are gathering around the Lamb of God ; when "the righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart." He was not only *poor* for our sakes, but an *orphan*, (LXX.) one with no father on earth, with no mother in hea-

S. Luke

xxii. 2.

Isa. lvi. 10.

Isa. lvii. 1.

Honorius.



ven; and who left Himself not merely destitute of all earthly succour, but endured that last mysterious pang, when He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" *Outcast*, (LXX. and Vulg. *poor*.) There is a pathetic variant here in some Æthiopic copies, which read *the lonely one*, fitly spoken of Him Who trod the winepress of His Passion alone, when all the disciples forsook Him and fled. Observe, moreover, that it is not enough for a judge to be inflexibly upright in his mere sentence. It is his duty to see that it be carried out, and not set aside by favour or violence. He is to *see that* such as are in need and necessity have right, and not merely a claim to be righted, he is to deliver them out of the hand of the ungodly. Pilate achieved the first part of the counsel; he defended the Poor and Needy seven times against the chief priests and the mob; he gave right judgment, saying, "I find no fault in Him;" but he did not see that He had right; he did not deliver Him out of the power of His enemies.

Haymo.

Isa. lxiii. 3.

Bellarmine.

S. John xix.

5 They will not be learned nor understand, but walk on still in darkness : all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

*Will not be learned.* A. V. more exactly, with the old versions, *They know not*. "For had they known it, they would not have crucified the LORD of Glory." And because they *walked on still in darkness*, they chose Barabbas in His stead, but that "blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Whence is added, *all the foundations of the earth are moved* (A. V. marg.) because thereupon began that great stirring among the nations, whereof the earthquake which rent the rocks at the Crucifixion was the forewarning and type. And those foundations still *will be moved* (LXX. and Vulg.) the shaking will never end till the gathering in of the nations is accomplished by the Church. There are two other mystical explanations of the latter clause, one that it refers to earthly potentates and men of merely secular desires, who shall be *moved*, either with wonder at lowliness, poverty, and sorrow being voluntarily chosen by the LORD as His own lot, or with terror at the judgment to come upon them, because when the Light shone in the darkness, they refused to comprehend it; the other, that it is a prophecy of the terrible devastation of the Holy City and the entire land of Israel at the hand of the Romans, as a punishment for rejecting the SAVIOUR. The literal sense makes a distinction between the ignorance and the dulness charged on the false judges, the first accusation, *They know not*, having reference to their neglect of studying the law they have to administer, while *nor understand* implies haste, inconsiderateness, and negligence in the investigation of any particular cause; the just decision of which might be arrived at by honest diligence of inquiry, without

A.  
1 Cor. ii. 8.

Rom. xi. 25.

S. Matt.  
xxvii. 51.

A.

Ric. Hamp.

D. C.

Agellius.



Calvin. any great legal information. But when haste and ignorance unite, then *all the foundations of the earth are out of course*, because the basis of society and all confidence in authority is rudely shaken. And so a heathen poet sings in like case :

Eurip.  
Medea.

ἄνω ποταμῶν ἱερῶν χωροῦσι παγαί,  
καὶ δίκαι καὶ πάντα πάλιν στρέφεται.  
ἀνδράσι μὲν δόλαι βουλαί, θεῶν δ'  
οὐκέτι πίστις ἔραρε.

Back flow the sacred rivers to their source,  
And right and all things veer around their course,  
Crafty are men in counsel, and no more  
God-plighted faith abides as once of yore.

6 I have said, Ye are gods : and ye are all the children of the most Highest.

7 But ye shall die like men : and fall like one of the princes.

A.

S. Matt.  
xxv.

There is a divergence of opinion as to these two verses, whether they are to be taken as addressed to the same persons, or to two different companies. S. Augustine, who mentions both views, inclines to the second, alleging that the earlier verse is spoken to the elect, whom CHRIST welcomes to the kingdom of His FATHER ; the latter to the reprobate, commanded to depart into everlasting fire. If addressed to the same persons, the sense will not be very different, but will run thus : " I have given you the choice of everlasting blessedness, and have granted you the adoption of sons, but ye have rejected My salvation, and shall perish in your sins." Herein *ye shall die like men*, because of your human frailty, and *fall like one of the princes*, because of your haughty pride, which will bring you down as it did Satan, who fell like lightning from heaven, where he had been *one of the princes*. One commentator subdivides the second verse, and sees in it a distinction of judgment between the less guilty Jewish multitude, who acquiesced in CHRIST's condemnation, and are therefore adjudged to *die like men*, while the more guilty chief priests are to *fall like one of the princes*, into the more terrible punishment of the devil.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

We must bear in mind the use the LORD Himself made of this verse in defending Himself from the charge of blasphemy, " Is it not written in your law, ' I said, Ye are gods ? ' If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken ; say ye of Him Whom the FATHER hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest ; because I said, I am the SON of God ? " And so doing, we shall see the fitness of that other explanation, which takes the whole passage of the election and subsequent casting off of Israel. The chosen people were *gods*, as the one

S. John x.  
35.



nation which knew good and evil; even the *children of the most Highest*, as being named by Him thus: "Israel is My son, even My first-born," but they died like men, either like their own father *Adam* (Heb. S. Hieron.) through disobedience, or like the Gentiles around them, falling too like *one of the princes* of the various empires which had risen and set on the world's horizon during the progress of their own history. Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, had come and gone, and now Israel's national existence was to be swept away also, deservedly, in its turn.

Gen. iii. 5,  
22.  
Exod. iv. 22.  
Cocceus.

8 Arise, O God, and judge thou the earth : for thou shalt take all heathen to thine inheritance.

*Arise* then, O Sole-begotten Son of God, slain by ungodly men, and buried in the grave, arise on the third day from the dead, and sending Thy judgment on the wicked land, the sordid and earthly hearts which rejected Thee : take to Thyself all nations for an inheritance, in the stead of that one rebellious people which would not have Thee to reign over it. *Arise* also now from Thy slumber in the tempest-tossed bark of Thy Church, in judgment against her worldly foes, and cause her to preach Thee among all nations ; *arise* to final judgment, coming with all Thy Saints, gathered from east and west, from north and south, out of all kindreds and tongues, and nations, and peoples, now militant here in earth, then to be triumphant and blessed in heaven.

Honorius.  
D. C.

S. Cyprian.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is a Judge among gods ; glory be to the SON, Who shall arise to judge the earth ; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who hath said to the faithful by the mouth of His prophet, "Ye are gods, and ye are all the children of the most Highest."

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

Grant us, O LORD, according to Thy precept, to abstain from wrong judgment ; and to minister to the needs of the poor, that we may attain to be joined unto the number of Thy children. (1.)

Ludolph.

O CHRIST, our GOD, make us ever ready to aid the poor and needy, and to keep Thy law, that abounding in works of mercy, we may become the fellows of the heavenly citizens. Through. (11.)

Mozarabic.

Arise, O LORD, Who judgest the earth, and as Thou dwellest in loving ownership of the faith of all nations, suffer us not to abide in darkness, but cause us to see the light of Thy truth, that we may build the foundations of our faith not upon the sand, which the whirlwind may cast down, but on the rock, whose strength Thou art. Through. (11.)

Mozarabic.



Mozarabic. Arise, O God, and judge the earth, that Thou Who rulest over all the Gentiles mayest be believed by those who crucified Thee, to have risen again, that the two nations may unite in love, when Thou bindest the circumcision and the uncircumcision together in the bond of Christian faith. Through. (11.)

Mozarabic. Arise, O God, Who judgest the earth, and rule with Thine arm of might those whom Thou hast vouchsafed to purchase by the victory of the Cross, and let the devout thanksgiving of them for whom the shedding of Thy precious Blood serves as redemption be offered unto Thee. And let us, who believe in Thy Passion for our redemption, who confess Thy glorious Resurrection, and proclaim Thine Ascension to the heavens, and await in awe Thy coming in terrible return, hasten joyfully to Thine Advent when the trumpet shall sound. And Thou, O most merciful LORD, deliver from the burnings of hell those whom Thou seest thus celebrating Thy holy rites, and grant that we may be partakers of a glorious resurrection. Through Thy mercy. (11.)

D. C. O God, from Whom every good work proceedeth and is strong, justify us with the spirit of righteousness and strength, that never giving wrong judgment, nor accepting the persons of the ungodly, we may always strive to do that which is right and pleasing unto Thee. Through. (1.)

## PSALM LXXXIII.

TITLE. A Song or Psalm of Asaph.

### ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST is the most High dweller over all the earth. The Voice of the Church to the LORD concerning the Jews, and of sons, and of all persecutors. The Voice of the Church to the LORD concerning the Jews and the sons of men. The Prophet, concerning CHRIST, sheweth that He reigneth over all nations here and in the judgment to come. Concerning persecutors.

VEN. BEDE. *A Song of a Psalm* is when, after a prelude on an instrument, the sound of a singing voice is heard, following and keeping time with the instrument, imitating the strains of the psalter with the tones of the voice. And because a *Song* mystically signifies contemplation of Divine wisdom; but a *Psalm*, which is produced by the hands, means the fulfilling of action, that is rightly called *A Song of a Psalm* wherein knowledge and instruction are united with effectiveness in good works, according to that saying, "If thou desire wisdom, keep the commandments, and the LORD shall give her unto thee;" a wonderful token whereof was manifest in Cornelius the centurion. As to what a *Psalm* of



a *Song* is and means, has been already said in the twenty-ninth (xxx.) Psalm.

*Asaph*, inasmuch as he had already foretold many things touching the LORD's Incarnation, is now in the first portion about to speak of His second Advent; beseeching Him, that as His enemies are to be greatly uplifted by means of Antichrist at the end of the world, His judgment ought to come quickly, lest the prolonged licence of that most grievous foe should avail to lay the whole Church waste. *O God, who shall be like unto Thee? keep not still silence, &c.* In the second portion he intreats, under the similitude of certain names, that vengeance may be taken upon them, through a desire for their correction, not with eagerness to curse them. *Do Thou to them as unto the Midianites.*

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A supplication for the people which had suffered heavy things, and a prophecy touching the end of GOD's enemies.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of address, and prayer, and supplication.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian.* Friday: Matins.

*Monastic.* Thursday: II. Nocturn.

*Parisian.* Saturday: Matins.

*Lyons.* Thursday: Nones.

*Ambrosian.* Wednesday of Second Week: I. Nocturn.

*Quignon.* Thursday: Nones.

#### ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* } Thou only \* art the most Highest over all the  
*Monastic.* } earth.

*Parisian.* For the thought of man \* will give thanks to Thee, and the remains of thought will keep holiday unto Thee.

*Ambrosian.* As preceding Psalm.

*Mozarabic.* Let the nations know that Thy Name is the LORD\* and that Thou art only the most Highest over all the earth.

1 Hold not thy tongue, O God, keep not still silence: refrain not thyself, O God.

The first clause of this verse runs in most of the older translations, (LXX., Vulg., Æthiop., Syr., Arab.,) *O God, who shall be like unto Thee?*<sup>1</sup> Likeness, comments a Greek Didymus. Father, is of two kinds, according to substance, which is identity; and according to quality, which is merely resemblance. In the first sense, no one can be like GOD save He Who is consubstantial with GOD, but in the other manner all saints made perfect can be like Him; for the LORD Himself has counselled us, "Be ye perfect, even as your FATHER S. Matt. v. 48.

<sup>1</sup> Taking  $\text{מִי}$  as though =  $\text{מִי־אֵל}$ , and the negative  $\text{אֵין}$  as an interrogative.



1 S. John  
iii. 2.

A.

Ps. xlv. 7.

Haymo.  
Remigius.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Exod. xv.  
11.

Honorius.

Isa. xlv. 14.

S. Bonavent.  
Isa. llii. 7.

S. Matt.  
xxvi. 53.

which is in heaven is perfect." And we are assured that this can come to pass, for the Beloved Disciple tells us that "when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Like Him then, of Whom is said, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom, Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, wherefore, O God, Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness." Like Him then, precisely because He willed to be like us, and like the meanest of us here, taking on Him the form of a slave, crucified along with thieves. Yet, although we may attain thus to the likeness of His glorified Manhood, none can be like Him in the glory of the FATHER. None can be like Him when He returns in His divine majesty, as it is written, "Who is like unto Thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" Least of all can that Wicked One, the Antichrist, attain to such resemblance, albeit he hath said, "I will be like the Most High," for he shall be smitten when the LORD comes again to judgment, when He will *keep not still silence*, but will utter His terrible voice so that all creation shall hear. And observe that He kept silence and refrained Himself here on earth in threefold fashion. There was His silence of speech before Pilate, when "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." There was His silence of act in the garden, when He said unto Peter, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My FATHER, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" There was His silence of will in His voluntary acceptance and endurance of death for us. But now His Church is sore troubled by her enemies, and would fain hear His voice bidding waves and winds be still, and commanding the evil spirits to depart into the abyss.

2 For lo, thine enemies make a murmuring : and they that hate thee have lift up their head.

S. Basil. M.  
Agellius.

Titelman.

Z.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

*A murmuring*, or rather, with S. Jerome and the A. V., *a tumult*, a loud, vague noise, as the roaring of the sea, such as an advancing army makes with the clashing of its weapons, the braying of its instruments, and the shouts of its soldiers. And accordingly the LXX. and Vulgate agree in translating the passage *have sounded* (*ἤχησαν, sonuerunt.*) *Sounded*, not *spoken*, observes S. Augustine, because it is the voice of irrational passion, not of intelligent, articulate reason, which the enemies of God utter. At first they are secret in their whisperings and incitements to error and iniquity, but when they think themselves strong enough for open war against the Faith, then they *sound* and preach their falsehood loudly. And this His enemies, the chief priests, did, when after secretly inciting the multitude against Him, they caused it to



break forth with the cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." *Have lift up their head.* That is, they have assumed a posture of bold attack, rising up from their former depression or obscurity, and this either by setting their *head*, that is, their mere human reason and faculties, against Almighty power and wisdom, or by choosing themselves a captain, which is Antichrist.

B.

R.  
D. C.  
A.

3 They have imagined craftily against thy people :  
and taken counsel against thy secret ones.

They note here two degrees of enmity, that directed by unbelievers against the Faith in general, and that more particular hostility with which the chief saints of God are pursued, those *secret* ones whom He hides under the shadow of His wings, whom He guards in peril as He did Noah in the ark, David in the cave, Elisha in Dothan, Athanasius in the very ship which bore his pursuers ; whom He compasses about with His own majesty to save them, as Alexander Severus folded Ulpian in the imperial purple when the Prætorians sought his life. Yet again, the words apply with especial force to those rulers of the Jews who *imagined craftily* against their own people, by leading them away from their Teacher, poisoning their minds towards Him, and took counsel oftentimes against the Hidden Wisdom of God, till they put Him to death.

C.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Bakius.

Thom.  
Heracleot.

4 They have said, Come and let us root them out,  
that they be no more a people : and that the name  
of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

Here is the *sound* of which the second verse told us ; the inner hatred breaking out into outward speech. And observe the bitterness of that hatred. The Egyptian tyrant did not go so far as this, at any rate in his first plottings against the children of Israel. He was content to prevent their rapid multiplication, lest they should be too strong for their taskmasters, and was willing that they should live, albeit as bondslaves. But the enmity of ungodliness against the Faith can be satisfied with nothing less than the total extirpation of believers, either through martyrdom or apostasy. They ask how the Church, which is gathered out of all nations, can fitly be here spoken of as but one people, and they answer their own inquiry by reminding us that Christians are the true spiritual descendants of Abraham, are born again alike in the one font of baptism, have one will and one King, and are citizens of one heavenly country. Their enemies would even, were it possible, abolish the very memory of the past, and cause men to forget that *Israel*, the "Prince with God," the

S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Hugo Card.  
Exod. i. 16.

C.

Ay.



Tertull.  
Apol. 50.

LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself, once walked on earth, or that the people which takes its name from Him ever had a place amongst mankind. So it was in the great Tenth Persecution, so in the overthrow of the Church of Japan, so in France under the Terror. And to each and all the true children of Israel re-echo Tertullian's noble saying, "The more we are mowed down, the more numerous we become, blood is the seed of Christians."

5 For they have cast their heads together with one consent : and are confederate against thee ;

6 The tabernacles of the Edomites, and the Ishmaelites : the Moabites, and Hagarens ;

7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek : the Philistines, with them that dwell at Tyre.

8 Assur also is joined with them : and have holpen the children of Lot.

De Muis.  
Targum.  
Lyranus.

S. Basil. M.

Theodoret.  
Z.

Ewald.  
Neh. iv. 7.  
Bellarmine.  
Bengel.

1 Chron. iv.  
41.

The enumeration of the peoples engaged in this confederacy against Israel has given rise to much discussion as to the date and occasion of the Psalm. A very few, with no good reason, include it amongst the Davidic portion of the Psalter. R. Kimchi, followed by several of the earlier critics, assigns it to the reign of Jehoshaphat, when Ammon, Moab, and the Edomites of Mount Seir did unite against Judah, others to Sennacherib's raid in Hezekiah's time, while several of the Fathers, followed by some eminent moderns, take it of the league made by Sanballat, with the Arabians, Ammonites, and Ashdodites, against the rebuilding of Jerusalem by Nehemiah. And others bring it lower down, taking it to be a Maccabee Psalm. The mention of Assyria, and indeed of Amalek, makes this last conjecture quite untenable, for the Assyrian empire (here apparently only growing into strength) had been succeeded by the Babylonian, Persian, and Macedonian dynasties long before the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, while the Amalekites, a very feeble remnant after Saul's great victory, were totally extirpated by the children of Simeon in the days of Hezekiah, which excludes the post-Captivity view also. But whatever be the historical and literal sense of the passage, there is little diversity in the mystical explanation of it, as denoting the various classes of God's enemies, who would fain lay waste and destroy His Church. Following in the track of S. Augustine, they seek for special lessons in the meaning of the proper names, though often erring as to their true signification. They remind us that the *tabernacles of the Edomites* point to the unstable and transitory aims of men of earthly and cruel minds, typified by the "red clay" which *Adam* or *Edom* denotes. The *Ishmaelites* are expounded as signifying those who obey

A.

C.



themselves only, and not God. But the name *Ishmael* means "heard of God," and we may therefore better take the sense to be those false Christians brought near to God in His ordinances, as was Ishmael by the rite of circumcision, but who nevertheless mock at the deeper mysteries of His promise, and therefore lose their share of His inheritance. *Moab*, too, meaning *seed of the father*, is a type of such as have illicitly entered into the fold of the Church, claiming to be lawful members of the Christian family, but who have climbed over the wall of the sheepfold, and not come in by the door. If the *Hagarenes* be named after Hagar, they will rank in the same class as the Ishmaelites, with, however, the special mark of *flight* attached to them, shunning, like Jonah, the call of God, going out, like their ancestress, from the trials of God's house to the sorer cross of self-chosen suffering in the desert of unbelief. The interpretation S. Augustine gives to this name, for an uncertain reason,<sup>1</sup> is that it denotes strangers and proselytes, who do not heartily submit to the laws of their new country, but retain an alien mind. *Gebal*, which is very diversely explained by the ancient commentators, seems to signify a *boundary*, and may then well denote those who busy themselves altogether with finite and temporal things, to the exclusion of such as are eternal and infinite. *Ammon* and *Amalek*, two of the earliest and most inveterate foes of Israel, are fitly grouped together, and once more signify for us revolted kin, not original aliens, for the one, springing like Moab from Lot, was of the race of Terah, Abraham's father; and the other, derived from a grandson of Esau, had the blood of both Abraham and Isaac in its veins. *Ammon*, a name derived from a root אָמַץ, "to gather together," is a type of the multitude in all ages, averse to any check on its pleasures and caprices, fickle, and often cruel, and most opposed to such as set before it a lofty standard of principle and action. *Amalek*, "the strangler of the people," an apt name for that nation of which the Lord said: "Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, when thou wast faint and weary, and feared not God;" is the type of all crafty and treacherous foes of the Church or of the soul, and in particular of those evil thoughts which attack us in seasons of languor and depression, when there is little vigour of mind or body to resist them. All these alienated kindred of the spiritual Israel league themselves with the *Philistines*, "strangers" or "wanderers," open and original foes of the chosen people, types of the heathen and of undisguised and open sin. They combine with them that dwell at *Tyre*; those hard and "rocky" souls which have no soil wherein the seed of the Word can take root.

Gen. xvii.  
23.  
Gen. xxi. 9.

Gen. xxxvi.  
12.

Deut. xxv.  
17.

A.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps his informant read אָמַץ, instead of אָמַץ.



8 Assur also is joined with them : and have holpen the children of Lot.

*Assyria*, like Egypt at an earlier period of Jewish history, is put for the idolatrous world-power in rebellion against God, for the organisation of human strength and self-will ungoverned by religious principles, for the unbelieving State, and it consistently lends its help and is *an arm* (Heb. S. Hieron.) not to the children of light, but to the children of Lot, that is, of "darkness," because Lot signifies a "veil" or "covering." The Latin commentators, for the most part following S. Augustine, by interpreting *Assur* as "elated" or "oppressing," and *Lot* as "backsliding," see in this place the devil and his angels, the allies of heathen and of false brethren. As to the literal meaning, it is enough to observe that if Assur here means, as is most probable, the empire or Nineveh, it is the earliest appearance of that state in Western Asia. But Theodoret takes it to mean the Samaritan colonists under Sanballat, who joined with Tobiah the Ammonite, and the Philistines of Ashdod, and the Edomite and Ishmaelite Arabians under Geshem, to prevent the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The total number of the confederates named is eleven, the mystical type of sin, because it is just one more than ten, the number of the precepts in the Decalogue, and thus denotes transgression of the moral law. Each battalion has its own especial banner and device as it marches to war against the Saints. The heretics bear a wolf; schismatics a screech-owl, hated of all the birds; the proud display a unicorn; the slothful a dormouse; hypocrites a scorpion, stinging with its tail; the wrathful have a lion; the covetous a mole, which ceases not to grub beneath the earth; the gluttonous bear a swine; the envious a tiger; the impure an ass; the desperate a man hanging by a cord.

9 But do thou to them as unto the Madianites : unto Sisera, and unto Jabin at the brook of Kison;

10 Who perished at Endor : and became as the dung of the earth.

Here the tone of the Psalm changes, and the prophet calls on God to renew His old loving-kindness, and to fight the battles of Israel. How memorable the overthrow of the Midianites was, may be gathered from the reference to it in Isaiah's great prophecy of the Incarnation : "For Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian." It is to be remembered that the special kind of suffering inflicted upon Israel by Midian was not a permanent military tyranny,



like that of the Philistines, but famine, caused by sudden raids made upon the crops by overwhelming forces. And hereupon the greatest mystical divine of the ancient Church reminds us that Israel suffered such things because, being carnally minded, it was as "he that soweth to his flesh, [who] shall of his flesh reap corruption," whereas they who aim higher receive the blessing, "He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." These are the fields which the Midianites cannot destroy, nor so much as reach. And in Gideon's great battle against Midian in the valley of Moreh, he had to fight with Amalek also, and with the children of the East, the Ishmaelite allies of his foe; that the odds might be so overwhelming as to prove the divine origin of the deliverance wrought by the three hundred with their pitchers and lamps; fit precursors of the little band of disciples who under Him of Whom Gideon, "the hewer down" of idols, was but a type, stormed the intrenchments and routed the forces of Paganism, after the shattered clay of the Sacred Humanity displayed the Light of Light to the darkened world. And observe that *Midian*, which means "strife," aptly denotes a world lying in anarchy, and capable of being brought into order by none save the Prince of Peace. Origen, who explains the word to mean "outside judgment," takes it as denoting all who live without the Law.

From the rout of Midian the Psalmist passes to the earlier defeat of the Canaanites in their last great stand against Israel. Here too the proper names employed give a mystical signification. *Sisera* denotes "battle-array," *Jabin* is the "wise" or "understanding," *Kishon* the "winding" or "crooked" stream. Power and organization, craft and skill, artifice and stratagem are in vain against the LORD. He conquered *Sisera*, and that by the "hand of a woman," first, when the Maiden at Nazareth reversed the curse of Eve's disobedience, in saying, "Behold the handmaid of the LORD, be it unto me according to thy word;" and next, when the mystical Bride of the Lamb overcame the world through suffering. *Jabin* is the type of the carnal understanding, into whose power we are delivered, when we refuse to learn a higher wisdom. And so speaks the Apostle: "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a mind void of judgment, to do those things which are not convenient." But this wisdom, which "descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish," CHRIST, Who is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God, destroys; "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." And this He did at *Kishon*, meeting the tortuous craft, the "thousand meanderings," of the old serpent, with Divine and superior intelligence. So, in the great Passiontide hymn, we read:

Judg. vi. 3.

Origen.  
Hom. vii. in  
Jud.

Gal. vi. 8.

Origen.  
A.

Judg. iv. 15.

Judg. iv. 9.

S. Luke i. 38.

Origen.  
Hom. iv. in  
Jud.  
Rom. i. 28.

S. James iii.

1 Cor. i. 19.

Prudentius.



S. Venant.  
Fortunat.  
The Hymn,  
*Pange  
lingua.*

For the work of our salvation  
Needs would have his order so,  
And the multi-form deceiver's  
Art by art would overthrow,  
And from thence would bring the medicine  
Whence the insult of the foe.

Haymo.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.  
A.

Wherefore it aptly follows, *Who perished at En-dor*.<sup>1</sup> For *En-dor* means the "well of the dwelling," the very source and habitation of the powers of evil, the grave and hell, which were spoiled and made a show of openly, after they had admitted their Conqueror in the guise of a captive; since which time they have become *as the dung of the earth*, not merely in that Christians can afford to condemn powers invested with unspeakable dread to others, but that as dung is profitable to fertilise the ground, so the very temptations of the evil one and the pains of death are used by God as means for the growth and perfection of the Saints. Evil men, too, perish at *Endor*, when they abide by their own springs alone, when they say, like Naaman, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" refuse the waters of regeneration, which alone can cleanse the leprosy of their souls; and become *as the dung of the earth* by persevering in coarse and degrading sin.

Hugo Card.

11 Make them and their princes like Oreb and Zeb: yea, make all their princes like as Zeba and Salmana;

12 Who say, Let us take to ourselves: the houses of God in possession.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Eccius.  
xxxiv. 20.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.

The details of Gideon's great victory, resulting not only in the rout of the armies of Midian, but in the slaughter of four princes of that nation, are recalled, in prayer that God may work equal deliverance for His people again. *Oreb*, the "raven," and *Zeeb*, the "wolf," are types of the unclean and rapacious powers of evil. *Zebah* is a "victim" or "sacrifice," but not in honour of God, rather such as is condemned by the Wise Man, "Whoso bringeth an offering of the goods of the poor, doeth as one who killeth a son before his father's eyes." *Salmana* or *Zalmunna*, the "shadowless" or "shelter forbidden," is that evil one who is the enemy

<sup>1</sup> Some unnecessary difficulty has been raised about this reference, as though it were the only record of a battle not elsewhere named. But Joshua xvii. 11, names *En-dor* as lying in the portion of Manasseh together with *Taanach* and *Me-*

*giddo*, which two are coupled by Deborah in her song as the scene of the victory over Jabin. There is thus no need to imagine a second battle, as the rout may very well have spread over all three districts.



and the opposite of the Man Who is "as the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land," a "shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." All these, gathering themselves together against the people of God, desire to drive them from their heritage. What, then, are these especial *houses of God* which they would fain seize? The first answer given is that the words apply to the whole land of Israel, comparing the language of Jehoshaphat, "And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab, and Mount Seir . . . come to cast us out of Thy possession, which Thou hast given us to inherit." Others take it of the city of Jerusalem, and more particularly of the Temple, with which agree the LXX. reading, the *altar*, and the Vulgate, the *sanctuary*. The Chaldee paraphrast and S. Jerome extend the meaning somewhat further, by rendering severally *every pure thing of God*, and the *beauty of God*. But the words have a yet deeper import for us, when we remember that saying of the Apostle, "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temples of the living God," as we shall then recognise the attempt of the evil spirits and their wicked allies on earth to bring the bodies and souls of CHRIST'S people into subjection to sin. But the sanctuary which we possess having the sacramental mysteries stored within it, the sacred Flesh and precious Blood, the graces of the SPIRIT'S might, the perennial fountain, and the light Divine, is too strong for them to take, unless it is betrayed from within.<sup>1</sup>

R. Kimchi.  
De Muis.

2 Chron. xx.  
10.

Targum.  
S. Hieron.

2 Cor. vi. 16.

Ay.

Arnobius.

13 O my God, make them like unto a wheel : and as the stubble before the wind.

*Like unto a wheel.* So all the older versions, while modern critics, translating, some *whirlwind*, and others *chaff* or *thisledown*, with reference to Isaiah xvii. 13, do not practically affect the inner meaning. The *wheel* is explained as an emblem of short-lived and unstable earthly prosperity, followed by spiritual destruction, because the hinder part of the wheel rises, and yet leaves behind what it has just

R. Kimchi.  
R. Solomon.  
Ay.  
Hupfeld.  
A.  
Carth.

<sup>1</sup> Two Cardinals of mediæval times (Joannes Vitalis and Hugo of S. Cher) interpret this text of the nepotism of great nobles, ecclesiastic and lay, making the dignities, benefices, and goods of the Church the hereditary fiefs of their families, the apanages of their children; and the latter of them applies his censure more particularly to the greed of the Roman Court of his day, aver-

ring that the Romans not only kept the Popedom in their own hands, but nominated some of themselves to every vacant prebend in Christendom, to the injury of episcopal rights, and the ruin of the Church. Lorinus hints at this passage, but is too discreet to quote it, recommending his readers to peruse it for themselves.



touched, while the fore-part, typical of the future, is always sinking, and as being circular and having no end, denotes the worm that dieth not. And whereas there is something of solidity in the wheel: the *stubble*, on the other hand, is light, feeble, and incapable of offering any resistance to the storm. Others, again, instead of *wheel*, translate the LXX. *τροχός* as a child's *top*, which is made to revolve quickly by lashing it, an emblem of sinners under the scourge of God. But there is no reason to depart from the usual rendering. The idea is a common-place amongst heathen writers, and occurs also in Ecclesiasticus, "The heart of the foolish is like a cart-wheel, and his thoughts are like a rolling axle-tree."

Hugo Card.

Haymo.

Genebrardus.

Eccus.  
xxxiii. 5.

14 Like as the fire that burneth up the wood : and as the flame that consumeth the mountains.

15 Persecute them even so with thy tempest : and make them afraid with thy storm.

This is the true connection of these verses, not taking the fourteenth with the preceding one, according to the Prayer Book punctuation. The *fire* and *flame* are ascribed to the Judgment-day in particular, as denoting the terrible wrath of God against sin, but are not thereby excluded from all reference to temporal punishment. The *wood* is taken by some to mean all savage, uncultured, and obstinate heathens, and the *mountains* as denoting the haughty and exalted. And observe that the latter clause of the verse intensifies the meaning, because the freer play of the winds upon lofty heights makes a fire among the timber fiercer and more destructive than it can be on the level. Cardinal Hugo, agreeing in the latter explanation, prefers to take the *wood* as the opposite idea to an orchard, and as denoting wealthy persons who bear no fruit, and are barren in good works.<sup>1</sup>

C. Some have seen a reference to volcanoes in the flame that burneth up the mountains, but there is no reason to suppose a Hebrew poet of so distant a day familiar with such an idea. The *storm* and *tempest* are taken universally by the old commentators to denote the irresistible wrath of God against impenitent sinners, and as denoting the terrors of the Doom. But the wording of the very next verse might well have induced some of them to add a milder explanation. The whole series of petitions may be taken in a good sense as praying for the conversion of sinners, whom God can make like unto those wheels which were guided by the spirit of the Living

S. Bruno  
Carth.  
Haymo.

Hugo Card.

L.

Cocceius.

Ezek. i. 15.

<sup>1</sup> This, he observes, is specially true of the Romans, as every one who has much to do with the Curia knows well. And he points his observations by meekly quoting the words of

Eliphaz the Temanite: "For the congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery." (Job xv. 34.)



Creatures in Ezekiel's vision, bearing upon them the likeness of a sapphire throne, whereon sitteth the Man. They may be caught away by the wind, to speed on God's errand, as Philip was when borne away from his Ethiopian convert to the city of Azotus, and the fire which lighted on the Apostles in fiery tongues may so baptize them with its purifying flame as to kindle them with burning love, destroying the wood, hay, stubble, but causing the fine gold to come out bright and clean from all dross. Wherefore is added :

Acts viii. 39.

Acts ii. 3.

16 Make their faces ashamed, O LORD : that they may seek thy Name.

More exactly, with A.V., LXX., and Vulgate, *Fill their faces with shame*. That is, in the literal sense, that they may lose all confidence in their idols, and acknowledge the God of the Jews to be mightier than their gods, "because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort." And one reminds us wisely that it is sometimes better for a Christian to fall, that he may be *ashamed*, and so *seek the Name* of JESUS as his one hope and stay, rather than stand, and be filled with spiritual pride in his own strength. It is therefore spoken by the Prophet, "O daughter of Zion, thou shalt go even to Babylon, there shalt thou be delivered." And this, too, is the aim and purpose of spiritual penalties and excommunications, such as that which shut Miriam out of the camp for seven days, as also of that shame which attends confession of sin, a "shame which is glory and grace," not like the false shame of concealment, which is more sin. And on this a Saint observes, "In this way one can arm his soul with the weapons of shame, for whose indicts himself by open mention of his secret faults, hath the memory of his shame as a guide for the future conduct of his life." But as only some of these evil-doers will be softened and turned to God by His chastisements in this world, while others will be the more hardened, it follows :

Titelman.

Dan. iii. 29.

Ay.

Lu.

Mic. iv. 10.

Hugo Card.

L.

Ecclesi. iv.

21.

S. Greg.

Nyss. Hom.

3 in Ecclesi.

17 Let them be confounded and vexed ever more and more : let them be put to shame, and perish.

18 And they shall know that thou, whose Name is JEHOVAH : art only the most Highest over all the earth.

We have in these words set before us the doom of the finally impenitent, who will see the overthrow of their king Antichrist, and the dominion of the Son of Man established over all creation, and who will then pass from His judgment-seat to their place of punishment. But, as before, a milder interpretation is not wanting nor unfit, and we shall perhaps

A.

C.

S. Bruno

Carth.



better construe the whole passage in connection with the sixteenth verse. Here we see shadowed out one great difference between the Old and the New Covenant, the severance made between earthly and spiritual well-being. To the Jew, so long as he was obedient to the Law, came victory and ease, while foreign tyranny, heavy exactions, and incessant suffering were the penalties for backsliding. But the Gospel offers itself to the mourner, the hungry, and the outcast, rather than to those who rejoice and are full of bread. And thus it has been usually a time of sorrow and distress in a nation when it has received the Faith. So it was with Judæa itself, so with the Roman empire, so with England, when the heathen Penda warred against the Cross. Let them then be *confounded*, when they reflect upon their guilt, and that *more and more*, by increasing sensitiveness of conscience, and a gradually higher standard of holiness; or for *ever and ever* (A.V., LXX., and Vulg.) by never again returning to their wickedness, and so let them *perish*, by dying to sin and to themselves, that they may live to CHRIST, and know that He Whose Name is JEHOVAH, is only the Most Highest over all the earth; and especially that none save He, no earthly potentate whatever, may dare to claim the Headship of His Church. His Name is *Jehovah*, for He is Very God of Very God; He is the *Most Highest*, for God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name. But it may be asked, Why Highest over all the *earth*, rather than over all the heavens? And the answer is, to quell the pride of man, who is earth, and will return to earth. "Why is earth and ashes proud?" Not justly for itself, but because God stooped to that earth and ashes, and taking it to Himself, crowned man, heretofore lower than the angels, with glory and worship, and set Him over all the works of creation.

And therefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, Whose Name is JEHOVAH; glory be to the SON, the King of Israel, Who only is Highest over all the earth; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Flame which burnt up with love those mountains of God, the Apostles and Martyrs.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

Ladolph. Take away from us, O LORD, all superfluity of error, that leaving the tribes of sin behind us, we may fear Thee only, Who dwellest most Highest over all the earth. Through. (1.)

Mozarabic. Let the Gentiles, for whom Thou didst hang upon the rood of the Cross, know, O CHRIST, that Thy Name is the LORD, and let knowledge bring them back to their Maker, as ignorance gave them up to sloth, that they may be converted



through knowledge of the faith, and rejoice in the hope of glory. (11.)

Arise, O God, keep not still silence, refrain not Thyself; but as they who hate Thee have lift up their head, fill their faces with shame, that being confounded, they may seek Thy Name; and save Thy people, that they may know the testimony of Thy might; be gracious unto Thine inheritance, Who art only the most Highest over all the earth. (11.)

O God, who is like unto Thee in goodness or in might? Thou Who teachest Thy Saints with Thy goodness, and defendest them with Thy might, Who bridlest the foaming mouths of their enemies, and hearkenest to the prayers of Thy servants. Grant us, who trust in Thy goodness, some small share of good works, to keep us safe from the counsel of our enemies, to wash us from sin, and make us well-pleasing unto Thee, that Thou mayest bring us to everlasting glory, Who art only the most Highest over all the earth. (11.)

O LORD our Redeemer, make Thine enemies as a wheel, them to whom the mystery of Thy Cross is foolishness, that they may be scattered as stubble before the face of the wind, and that an abiding-place for ever may be granted unto them that believe, or shall hereafter believe in Thee. (11.)

Look, O LORD, upon Thy people, and be exalted in Thy majesty above them that hate Thee, and drive into headlong ruin those who hasten to attack Thy faithful ones, that confounded and put to shame, they may know that Thou only art most Highest over all the earth. (11.)

O God of celestial majesty, unto Whom none is like, destroy us not out of the nation of the elect, by reason of the multitude of our sins, but, of Thy merciful goodness, cause our names to be counted amongst Israel for evermore. Through. (1.)

D. C.

## PSALM LXXXIV.

**TITLE.** To the Chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah. LXX. and Vulgate: To the end, for the presses, a Psalm for the sons of Kore. Chaldee Targum: For praise, upon the harp brought from Gath, by the hands of the sons of Korah, a hymn.

### ARGUMENT.

**ARG. THOMAS.** That CHRIST opens the kingdom of the heavenly house. Concerning them who have attained the Faith. To them who shall attain a dwelling in the house of the LORD. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER on behalf of the Church. A Psalm to be read along with the Gospel of S. Matthew. Unto them who



have attained the Faith. The Advent of CHRIST in Manhood, and concerning the Churches. A prayer over the field.

VEN. BEDÆ. Three Psalms, viii., lxxx. (81) and lxxxiii. (84) are entitled *for the presses*, that is, for the sufferings of the Holy Church. And therein the numbers eight and eighty denote the hope of future resurrection, with the number ten, signifying the penny (*denarius*) of everlasting life, which the Church shall receive after her afflictions, like a wine-cellar after the press. And this is that most blessed *end*, which is included in all the titles which are worded *for the presses*. And in that lxxxiii. is the last Psalm which is named *for the presses*, this shows that the resurrection of the Church is hallowed in the vision of the Holy Trinity, when *the God of gods shall be seen in Sion*. The *sons of Korah* are the sons of the Cross, as has been already said; or as Arnobius expounds it. Whereas in the previous psalm they who desired to seize on the sanctuary of GOD were confounded and perished, and excited loathing and produced hindrances to charity and other virtues, now, on the other hand, that the LORD reigns in us, who once were *sons of Korah* the rebel, we became sons of GOD, our evil fathers having been swallowed up by the earth; and we, who aforetime thought to bear the fire of lust and avarice, strange to GOD, now kindled with the fire of divine love, say, *O how amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou Lord of Hosts*. This explanation of Arnobius is supported by the fact, that in the first, second, and third places wherein the *sons of Korah* are named in the title, *Understanding* is added at the same time; but in the third place, as though these *sons of Korah* had been rebuked on stricter inquiry, it is thus written: *For them who shall be changed, the sons of Korah, for understanding*. These *sons of Korah*, in the first part of the psalm, declare their unutterable longing for the Church. *O how amiable are Thy dwellings, O Lord!* In the second clause, they confess that he is happy, to whom the LORD gives help, and whom He causes to attain to the grace of Confession. *Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee*. In the third place, they say that it is far better to dwell obscure in the House of the LORD than to enter the tabernacle of sinners with any worldly honours. *For one day in Thy courts, &c.*

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of the sons of Korah, which David composed when he was going forth of Sion to worship in the House of the LORD. It is said also to be a prophecy of CHRIST and of His Church.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A prophecy of CHRIST and of His Church.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of glorifying in the LORD.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian*. Friday: Matins. [Corpus Christi: III. Nocturn. Dedication of a Church: II. Nocturn. Sacred Heart: III. Nocturn.]

*Monastic*. Thursday: II. Nocturn. [Corpus Christi: II. Nocturn. Dedication of Church: II. Nocturn.]

*Ambrosian*. Wednesday of Second Week: I. Nocturn.

*Parisian*. Thursday: Terce.



*Lyons.* Friday: Terce.

*Quignon.* Wednesday: Vespers.

*Eastern Church.* Nones.

## ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* Ferial: As preceding Psalm. [Corpus Christi: From Thine Altar \* O LORD, we receive CHRIST, in Whom our heart and flesh rejoice. Dedication: This is none other \* than the House of GOD, and the gate of Heaven. Sacred Heart: GOD loveth mercy and truth \* the LORD will give grace and worship.]

*Monastic.* Ferial: Thou hast blessed \* O LORD, Thy land. [Corpus Christi: As *Gregorian*. Dedication: The temple of GOD is holy, it is GOD's husbandry, it is GOD's building.]

*Parisian.* I believe \* verily to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

*Ambrosian.* As Psalm lxxxii.

*Mozarabic.* My heart and my flesh rejoice in the living GOD.

1 O how amiable are thy dwellings: thou LORD of hosts!

2 My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living GOD.

For *dwellings*, the A. V. more exactly, with LXX. and Vulgate, reads *tabernacles*, and thus suggests a contrast between these moveable tents and the permanent *courts* of the second verse. "There are," observes S. Bernard, commenting on this passage, "three conditions of holy souls; to wit, first in the corruptible body; secondly, without the body; thirdly, in the glorified body. First in warfare, next in rest, thirdly in perfect blessedness; first, that is to say, in *tabernacles*, secondly, in *courts*, thirdly in the House of the LORD. O how amiable are Thy tabernacles, Thou Lord of Hosts! But His *courts* are much more desirable, so that he adds, *My soul hath a desire and longing for the courts of the Lord*. Yet as even in these courts there is some imperfection, altogether blessed are they who dwell in Thy House, O LORD." Some, however, reading the whole of the first verse in close connection, see in the *tabernacles* the abiding place of the armies of heaven, for we read in another psalm, "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." Heaven is like a camp, for it is strong and secure from the enemy, and because there, as in an earthly army in time of warfare, there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage. And this is the view most dwelt upon by the earlier commentators. As the Jews in their captivity at Babylon longed for a sight of the Holy City, for its feast of *tabernacles*, and its solemn rites in the Temple; so the saints, exiles here on earth from their country, long to flee thither and be at rest. Hence it is that this Psalm has been so often

Serm. in  
fest. Omn.  
ss. 3.

Cd.

Titelman.  
Ps. xxxiv. 7.  
A. V.

R.

Apollina-  
rius.  
S. Cyprian.  
de Morta-  
litate.  
S. Hieron. in  
Zach. xiv.



A.  
2 Cor. v. 1.

S. Hieron.  
Ep. 28.

Ay.

1 Kings vii.  
12.

S. Athana-  
sius.

Titelman.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Hugo Card.

Numb. xxiv.  
5.

Anonym.  
Græc.

S. Hieron.  
Epitaph.  
Nepotiani.

Words-  
worth, *Eccel.*  
*Sonnets.*  
xliii.

on the lips of dying Christians, eager to depart and be with CHRIST, for they "know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Accordingly, these verses were recited by S. Paula as she lay on her death-bed, and they form still a part of the Burial Office for Priests in the Western Church. Note too that the plural *tabernacles* points to the "many mansions" in our FATHER'S House, while the word *courts*, implying size and spaciousness, assures us that there will be room there for all who desire to enter in. Wherefore it is written of Solomon's house, that "the great court round about was with three rows of hewed stones," because the circular form is the most capacious of all. There are other senses, too, in which we may take the words. The tabernacles may well denote the Churches of God; the outer courts here on earth of His great temple in the heavens, plural, as locally separate, just as were the various detached portions of the great House in Sion, and yet one, as belonging and united to it only. Again; just as Gentiles who are struck with the beauty of the Gospel, and desire to enter into the Church of God, so devout Christians look with admiration and love upon the Religious life, the warrior tents of the active Orders, the peaceful courts of the contemplative ones; exclaiming with Balaam, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles; O Israel." Yet again, as God is pleased to dwell within His Saints, all those who have made their souls a fitting habitation for Him, are tabernacles which excite the love, the longing, and the emulation of less perfect followers of the Lamb. Finally, the words may be taken by us in that primary sense which they bore for the Jews, love for the house wherein we worship God, and desire not only to seek Him therein, but to show our zeal by costly adornment and sedulous decoration of His shrines.

Give all thou canst, high heaven rejects the lore  
Of nicely-calculated less or more;  
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense  
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof  
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,  
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells  
Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die;  
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof  
That they were born for immortality.

*My soul hath a desire and longing.* Here once more the Prayer Book version is too weak. The A. V. rightly translates, with all the old versions, instead of *longing*, *My soul fainth*. Not from weakness doth she faint, observes an early writer, but because of passionate love, for this is the wont of lovers parted from those they love. We may *desire* heavenly things, and yet not *faint* for them, comments S. Gre-

Eusebius  
Cæsariensis.



gory the Great, so long as we are held back by earthly pleasures, but we both desire and faint when our eagerness for the highest blessings causes us to die to ourselves. And this fainting, which causes us to lose our own strength, is the true means for acquiring the strength of God. We fail, and cease to be what we were before, but become something better and stronger, as the grape, forced out of its form and nature in the *presses* of which the title speaks, becomes rich wine fit for storage in the cellars. They remind us how often in Holy Writ we read of the bodily suffering which great spiritual visions entail, how the Queen of Sheba had "no more spirit in her," when she beheld Solomon in all his glory, how "Daniel fainted and was sick certain days" after Gabriel's revelation to him; how Peter "knew not what he said," as he looked on his transfigured Lord; how Paul could not tell whether his trance were in the body or out of the body. They count up seven reasons for this eager longing after the heavenly Jerusalem, namely, its freedom, its pure and perfect joy, its bestowal of wishes, its endless and unbroken peace, its complete security, its unvarying health, its glorious companionship. Many a divine and many a poet has endeavoured to give some faint expression to this craving of the soul, and perhaps none more effectively than the Cluniac monk :

S. Greg. M.  
Mor. in Job.  
v. 39.

S. Ambrose.

A.  
Honorius.

L.  
1 Kings x. 5.  
Dan. viii. 27.

S. Luke ix.  
33.  
2 Cor. xii. 2.

Hugo Card.

Jerusalem the glorious!  
The glory of the elect!  
O dear and future vision  
That eager hearts expect:  
Even now by faith I see thee:  
Even here thy walls discern:  
To thee my thoughts are kindled,  
And pant, and strive, and yearn.

Bernard.  
Cluniac.  
Rhythmus.

Jerusalem the only,  
That lookest from heaven below,  
In thee is all my glory,  
In me is all my woe;  
And though my body may not,  
My spirit seeks thee fain,  
Till flesh and earth return me  
To earth and flesh again.

*My heart and my flesh.* That is, my soul and my body. And the words prove the grade of saintliness which the true disciple may reach even here, that the flesh can be so subdued to the spirit as not to rebel, but to obey its higher impulses. *Rejoice*, but how, if desire and fainting precede? The Apostle will tell us, "Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer." Yet again, the Wise Man teaches us that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." How can we then justly use the word *rejoice*? The reply is twofold, or rather but one. First, that God gives His faithful ones,

Gloss.

A.  
Rom. xii. 12.  
Prov. xiii.  
12.



S. Albertus  
Magnus.

S. Augustinus,  
Hom. 33.

S. Thomas  
Aquinas.  
S. Fulgen-  
tius ad Tra-  
simundum.

who are patient in tribulation, a foretaste of future glory, enough to sustain and gladden them, that they may continue in prayer. Next, as a great Saint observes, the soul "doth not rejoice in this world, in riches, in honour, in luxury, in drunkenness, in dead vanities, nor in vanities which will quickly die, together with the love of them, but *in the living God*. Why did he not say simply 'in God,' instead of adding, 'in the *living* God?' In order to show that everything which belongs not to the worship of God we ought to account as dead." And, finally, we may take these verses as spoken in the person of CHRIST Himself, eaten up with zeal for the House of God, and Whose unstained Body coincided with every volition of His perfect soul, while both were inseparably joined to the Godhead of the Word in hypostatic union.

3 Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young : even thy altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.

Targum.

A.

Ps. cii. 7.

Hugo Card.

Lev. xiv. 49.

There is some variation of the readings here, as regards the particular birds named. The Targum explains them as the *dove* and the *turtle*, and interprets the reference to the altar as merely denoting the use of these in sacrifice. The other ancient versions agree with the English as regards the first word, but translate the second as *turtle*, like the Chaldee. S. Augustine allegorizes the verse, not without beauty, as follows : He has been speaking of two things which rejoice, his heart and his flesh, and he has set over against these, two parables drawn from birds, the *sparrow* and the *turtle* ; the one denoting the heart, and the other the flesh. The sparrow hath found her an house ; my heart hath found her an house. She plies her wings with the virtues of her life, faith, hope, and charity, wherewith she may fly to her house ; and when she comes thither, she will abide there, and the complaining note of the sparrow which is here, will not be there. For the sparrow is a complaining bird, of which is said in another Psalm, "As a sparrow that sitteth alone upon the house-top." She flieth from the house-top to the house. Only let her be on the top, and spurn her carnal dwelling, she will then have a heavenly, an eternal house, and there will end her moan. He ascribes *young* to the turtle, that is, to the flesh. *The turtle hath found a nest where she may lay her young*. The *house* is for ever, the *nest* but for a while ; and that nest is the Church militant on earth, the true faith, the Catholic faith, wherein Christians bring forth the fruit of good works. Again ; some explain the sparrow of the Saints of active life, reminding us that it leaves the barren wood to dwell close to the houses of men, and that it is the bird, צפר, used in the rite of atonement for leprosy, and thus



a type of the abandonment of sin and pursuit of holiness; while the *turtle*, as the constant emblem of chaste love and yet of mournfulness, denotes the penitent Saints of the contemplative life. Cardinal Hugo, according to his wont, sums up the qualities which make the sparrow a fit type of devout souls, in a distich, thus :

D. C.  
Ay.

Prole potens, hominum vicinus, et hostia lepræ,  
Callidus, et cantans, hyemans, cibus est, volat, ignit.

Fruitful, a friend of man, the leper's sacrifice,  
Wise, tuneful, migrates not, is food, flies, fires.

One other interpretation sees in the sparrow, with its lofty flight, CHRIST Himself, seeking, at the Ascension, His house in the highest heavens, while His faithful spouse, the Church, sighing for Him in her exile here, lovingly brings up her young in the nest of peaceful meditation. And with the former of these two notions agrees that old hymn addressed to Our LORD.

S. Greg. M.  
Mor. xvi. 19.

Ave passer salutaris,  
Qui frequenter immolaris  
Super tuis sacris aris,  
Nunquam tamen consummaris.

Psalt. Jasu.

Hail, O sparrow of salvation,  
Thou which oft art made oblation  
At Thine holy altar's station,  
Rite which hath no termination.

S. Augustine gives another reason than this, taking, as he does in another place, both sparrow and turtle as types of CHRIST. Our SAVIOUR, observes he, is compared to a sparrow, because it is a very insignificant bird, as He first taught us humility, and as the *turtle* is the chastest of birds, so He first taught us purity.

S. August.  
Hom. 33.

If we translate the word *חֵירוֹר* meaning "freedom," as *swallow*, which seems the most exact rendering, we then get a mystical contrast of another kind. The sparrow, keeping close at all times to the houses, denotes the faithful soul abiding steadfastly in the Church on earth; the *swallow*, a migrating bird, and the *swift*, a variety of it, which is in perpetual motion, and rarely touches the ground, will serve as the type of ransomed pilgrim souls which seek a better country, and seldom come in contact with earthly and carnal thoughts. *Thine altars.* The altar, as the most sacred part of the temple, is put for the whole building, around and about which the sparrows and swallows made their nests and flattered in security. We are told how even heathens looked on the birds which so trusted themselves, as it were, to di-



- vine protection as sacred and inviolate; how one man was slain for harming a sparrow which had sheltered itself in a temple of Æsculapius; how another drove out the sparrows from a sacred fane as a parable in action to shame those who proposed to deliver up a suppliant to his enemies; and we may well believe that not less reverence was exhibited by the Jews.
- Le Blanc. Interpreting the two birds of Christian souls, we may take the *altars* here in the most literal sense, with a true and deep meaning, as referring to the tables whence the heavenly banquet is dispensed for our refreshment, whereon lies that Body which gathers the eagles together. Or we may take the altars as denoting the human Soul and Body of CHRIST, on which the sacrifices of the faithful are daily offered, and wherein we shall have our eternal mansions, as we shelter in His side. And so the last of the Fathers exclaims: "O happy clefts, which build up faith in the Resurrection and in the Divinity of CHRIST! 'My LORD,' saith Thomas, 'and my God:' Whence came this oracle, save out of the clefts of the Rock? Herein the sparrow hath found her an house, and the turtle a nest where she may lay her young. Herein the dove guards herself, and fearlessly looks on the wheeling hawk."
- Honorius. As there were two principal altars in the Temple, that of burnt-offering and of incense, so CHRIST represents both to us, inasmuch as we offer up in Him our active works and the sacrifice of our animal passion, as well as the perfume of meditation and prayer. Or we may extend the word to denote all the sacraments and holy rites of the Church, which are the nest wherein devout souls abide, and where they raise their young. And as CHRIST suffered on the altar of the Cross, so all those who take up that Cross, and offer on it their affections and lusts, being crucified to the world, and imitating His Passion, make it their nest, where they shelter under His outspreading wings. Yet again; when they pass from the sufferings of this world, their souls await their consummation and final bliss under the golden altar of GOD in heaven, their safe haven after a stormy ocean. But if CHRIST be the speaker, and we are to look for His abiding-place, more than one interpretation is open to us. His altars will be, first, the will of His FATHER, on which He offered up His own will and His life; next, they will be His Saints, whose life is a daily sacrifice, and in whom He is pleased to dwell; and finally, we may take the altars, as in the case of His people, of the heavenly country itself. Note, then, the various epithets by which it is described in the psalm. It is styled *tabernacles*, because of the indwelling; *courts*, by reason of spaciousness; *house*, as a place of quiet; *nest*, because of security; *altars*, by reason of the perfect oblation. And the delightfulness of this happy land consists not even in all these, but because there is the palace of *my King and my God*, in Whose presence is the fulness of joy.
- Ellan. Var. Hist. v. 17. Herod. i. 159.
- S. Bern. Sermon in Cant. lxi.
- S. Albertus Magnus.
- Haymo.
- Hugo Card.
- Ay.
- Rev. vi. 9.
- B.
- Hugo Card.



Yes, God my King and portion,  
In fulness of His grace,  
We there shall see for ever,  
And worship face to face.

Bern.  
Cluniac.  
Rhythmus.

4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house : they will be alway praising thee.

In the literal sense, this expresses the longing of the exiles Agellius. in a heathen land for the solemn rites of the Temple, and contrasts the happiness of those Priests and Levites who served in the sanctuary with the misery of such as are cut off from all participation in the daily service of God. The words may Titelman. then fitly be applied by us to the happiness of those who are faithful members of the Church on earth, and especially, as some will have it, to the inmates of Religious houses, whose special task is the continual offering of the sacrifice of praise. But the highest sense is that which sees in the *house* that Hugo Card. heavenly dwelling which is for all time, vast, spacious, and unshaken ; not like the frail and narrow *nest* in which we Bellarmine. make our abode here on earth. And observe, remarks S. A. Augustine, that all earthly happiness springs out of action or possession. Necessity is the mother of all inventions, and we are unable to imagine any riches or any felicity which does not depend on our doing or obtaining something. What then does heaven offer us ? The possession of God, and the unceasing task of praising Him. Our business there will be the unending Alleluia. Nor let any one fear that weariness S. Bernard. and satiety must come of this ; for praise can only cease when love ceases, or when wonder ceases. But as our love Le Blanc. and knowledge of God will grow to all eternity, inasmuch as the subject matter is infinite, the praise will be always new, always ardent, always delightful.

5 Blessed is the man, whose strength is in thee : in whose heart are thy ways.

As the preceding verse taught us the blessedness of fruition, so this one teaches the blessedness of hope. They are blessed who need no more help, who have attained their crown and rest, but he is blessed too in his degree, who is toiling onwards, leaning on the everlasting Arm, towards his home. *In whose heart are Thy ways.* The word *Thy* is not R. Kimchi. in the Hebrew, and though giving a very true sense, adopted by many, limits unnecessarily the scope of the meaning here. The literal rendering is, *Highways are in their heart.* The Rosen. *highway*, a paved and solid road, contrasted with a mere path, müller. miry, uneven, and short, is taken by the Chaldee paraphrast as denoting confidence in God. But a somewhat wider Targum. meaning is given by comparing the words of the two great



- Prophets: of whom the one, speaking of CHRIST's kingdom, says: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there." Jeremiah, calling on his nation to repent, cries aloud, "Set thee up way-marks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart towards the highway, even the way which thou wentest; turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities." It is thus the way of salvation, the whole course of obedience to the will of God in self-denial and holiness of life; the chart of which must be indelibly printed in the pilgrim's heart, that he may not stray from the one track which leads to the heavenly city. And with this squares very well that literalist interpretation, not without its fitness and beauty, which sees here a reference to the Jews in distant places, setting their faces towards Jerusalem as the three great festivals drew on, and making their preparations to take the road which led thither. And remembering what is in truth the King's highway, Who it is that hath said, "I am the Way," we come to the truest and deepest sense of all, for blessed are they who have Him in their hearts. But the LXX. and Vulgate turn the latter clause of the verse, *He hath appointed goings-up* (*ἀναβάσεις*, ascensiones) *in his heart*. Here too we have a literal meaning assigned, not very different in its force from that already cited, that these *goings-up*, instead of applying to the elevated roadways, mean here the "terraces" or "stairs" which Solomon made for the temple with the alumn-trees, for which the same word מַסְלֹת is used. But what these *goings-up* may mean for us, let us hear. One tells us that we ascend by love, and love only; another that each sin repented and conquered is a fresh step on which we tread as we leave it behind in mounting; while a third specifies three great terraces of ascent, to wit, humility, works of mercy, and contemplation, which have severally ten, six, (according to the older computation of the works of mercy,) and seven grades. There are various other interpretations given of these steps, but they differ only by indicating divers virtues and good works as specially intended, and may well be summed up under the three heads of the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways of salvation. And man can *appoint* in his heart such a going-up by the co-operation of grace and free-will. He can appoint it, that is, set his resolve towards it, but he cannot accomplish it of himself. No one can do so, save He Who hath said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven." And He too is that Blessed One, Whose strength was in His FATHER, and Who,
- Isa. xxxv. 8. says: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there." Jeremiah, calling on his nation to repent, cries aloud, "Set thee up way-marks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart towards the highway, even the way which thou wentest; turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities." It is thus the way of salvation, the whole course of obedience to the will of God in self-denial and holiness of life; the chart of which must be indelibly printed in the pilgrim's heart, that he may not stray from the one track which leads to the heavenly city. And with this squares very well that literalist interpretation, not without its fitness and beauty, which sees here a reference to the Jews in distant places, setting their faces towards Jerusalem as the three great festivals drew on, and making their preparations to take the road which led thither. And remembering what is in truth the King's highway, Who it is that hath said, "I am the Way," we come to the truest and deepest sense of all, for blessed are they who have Him in their hearts. But the LXX. and Vulgate turn the latter clause of the verse, *He hath appointed goings-up* (*ἀναβάσεις*, ascensiones) *in his heart*. Here too we have a literal meaning assigned, not very different in its force from that already cited, that these *goings-up*, instead of applying to the elevated roadways, mean here the "terraces" or "stairs" which Solomon made for the temple with the alumn-trees, for which the same word מַסְלֹת is used. But what these *goings-up* may mean for us, let us hear. One tells us that we ascend by love, and love only; another that each sin repented and conquered is a fresh step on which we tread as we leave it behind in mounting; while a third specifies three great terraces of ascent, to wit, humility, works of mercy, and contemplation, which have severally ten, six, (according to the older computation of the works of mercy,) and seven grades. There are various other interpretations given of these steps, but they differ only by indicating divers virtues and good works as specially intended, and may well be summed up under the three heads of the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways of salvation. And man can *appoint* in his heart such a going-up by the co-operation of grace and free-will. He can appoint it, that is, set his resolve towards it, but he cannot accomplish it of himself. No one can do so, save He Who hath said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven." And He too is that Blessed One, Whose strength was in His FATHER, and Who,
- Jer. xxxi. 21. /
- Aben-Ezra. De Wette. Vatablius.
- Agellius. 2 Chron. ix. 11.
- A.
- C.
- Hugo Card.
- S. Albertus Magnus. Ay.
- Honorius.
- S. Bruno Carth.
- S. John iii. 13.
- Vieyra.



even here in the valley of weeping, had already ordained His going-up on high to reign.

6 Who going through the vale of misery, use it for a well : and the pools are filled with water.

The LXX. and Vulgate are at variance here with the English version. Both agree in coupling the first part of the verse with the preceding one, as explaining the place of *going-up*, and read *In the valley of weeping*. That is, in this present life of humiliation and suffering; the press wherein the grapes must be crushed into wine, the depth whence we must commence to climb to the mountain's summit. Then follows, *in the place which he appointed*. That is, as they severally take it, in the place which man, by his sin, has made what it now is, a place of sorrow and pain; or if we take *he* to mean God, then this world is the place which He has appointed for our education and cleansing. They take also a further and more beautiful view, by turning the phrase, *into the place which He appointed*. That is, we are going *through* the valley of weeping, as mere passing travellers, not to abide there, but we are going *into* the kingdom prepared for us from the beginning of the world, there to dwell for evermore. The true sense of the passage seems to point to the zeal and resolution which overcame all obstacles in the way. The valley through which the pilgrims journey to Jerusalem is arid and waterless, and there is therefore no use in sinking wells. But cisterns or tanks can be formed on the surface by diligent toil, so as of the whole valley to make a well, and the *early rain* (Heb.) then covers with *blessing* (Heb.) this valley with its *pools* and fills them. And this holds especially of those who are set in some place where there is a dearth of the Word and Sacraments of the Church, but who set themselves at all costs to obtain the water of salvation to quench the thirst of their souls. It is not on earth, so far as they are concerned, but must come to them from heaven; all they can do is to make ready in faith for its reception, and trust to God so to bless them with His rain, that they who have gone forth weeping, and bearing good seed, may come again with joy, and bring their sheaves with them. With this agree the words that follow in the Vulgate and LXX. which, instead of *the pools are filled with water*, read *for the lawgiver will bestow blessing*. He Who gave the Law as a press and a burden to afflict us, will give us grace and blessing in its stead, that after our trouble we may have joy. There is a curious Jewish interpretation of the whole passage to the effect, that sinners, when beginning to repent, as they pass through the valley, will weep so copiously as to make the whole place a well of water, and will then break out into blessings upon the Lord Who taught them the way by which

A.

C.  
R.

Haymo.

Calvin.

Ps. cxxvi. 7.

A.

Targum.  
R. Ishaki.  
Cajetanus.



they refused to go, and hath now afflicted them for their correction.

7 They will go from strength to strength : and unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Sion.

Cocceius.  
De Muis.

1 Chron. xii.  
22.

Hupfeld.

C.

B.

A.

Hugo Card.

Z.

S. Hieron.  
Hugo Card.

Eph. iv. 15.

Le Blanc.

S. Matt. xix.  
21.

S. Matt. ix.  
6.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

Honorius.

D. C.

*From strength to strength.* These words have been frequently translated *troop to troop*, and explained of the zeal of the new pilgrims, who hasten on so fast along the way, as to overtake and pass company after company of their predecessors, who at first had left them far behind. Thus the publicans and harlots pressed before the priests and lawyers into the kingdom of heaven; thus weak women, like S. Faith, advanced into the noble army of Martyrs when men shrank back afraid; thus too, the great array of the Saints grows ever larger, according to that saying, "At that time day by day there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God;" until the number of the elect is complete, and all appear together in Sion. But a more usual interpretation of the passage is to see here a special blessing promised to the pilgrims, that whereas in other journeys men became weaker and weaker as they drew near the close, those who seek Jerusalem will grow in vigour as they march, and will reach the Holy City in perfected strength. They will go from the strength of the Law to that of Grace; they will ascend the ladder of holiness, adding one virtue to another; they will pass from the strength of action to that of contemplation; they will pass from humility to grief for sin, and so to full repentance and amendment, from the strength of conflict in this world to the strength of sinlessness in the world to come. So again, we may pass from the lower stages of holiness, from the commoner virtues, necessary for all men to salvation, to the higher practice of those Evangelical counsels addressed to but a few; we are to go on "growing up unto Him in all things, which is the Head, even CHRIST." And observe that it is said *They will go*, showing that not the will and affection alone, but the actions of our life must co-operate with God's grace in this ascent of the soul. Wherefore the LORD saith in one place, "If thou wilt be perfect, *go* and sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, . . . and come, and follow Me;" and again in another, "Arise, take up thy bed, and *go* unto thine house." And the immediate goal of such progress is the vision of God. Even here, in *Sion*, the place of expectation, we can spiritually contemplate Him, and still more perfectly in the open vision of the heavenly Sion, where we may see Him face to face. To those under the Law the words telling of *the God of gods in Sion*, were a prophecy of the visible appearance of the Incarnate SAVIOUR in the earthly Jerusalem, to those under Grace they are no less clear in



promising His presence in Jerusalem which is above, the mother of us all, to see Him Who is *God of gods* on earth, that is, of those true Saints of His, who are gods in their likeness unto Him; Who is *God of gods* in heaven, Eternal above the seraphim.

Cd.

In a glass, through types and riddles,  
Dwelling here, we see alone :  
Then serenely, purely, clearly,  
We shall know as we are known,  
Fixing our enlightened vision  
On the glory of the Throne.

The Hymn  
*Quisquis  
valet.*

There the Trinity of Persons  
Unbeclouded shall we see ;  
There the Unity of Essence  
Perfectly revealed shall be :  
While we hail the Threefold Godhead,  
And the simple Unity.

And therefore, in his eagerness for this full enjoyment of the s. Bruno  
Beatific Vision, the singer bursts into a rapture of prayer : Carth.

8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer : hearken,  
O God of Jacob.

9 Behold, O God our defender : and look upon  
the face of thine Anointed.

The words of this verse have been taken to signify that the Anointed himself is the speaker in the Psalm, and this, in connection with the possible Babylonian date, on which the Greek Fathers dwell, has suggested the idea that the imprisoned Jehoiachin may be the author. But the Jewish commentators, for the most part, look on it as a mere appeal to the memory of David, and a prayer for help, for his sake, perhaps especially to his descendant, Zerubbabel, Prince of the Captivity, and thus, in a sense, the Anointed of the LORD. My *prayer*, my one longing, is for Thee; *hearken* then, O God of *Jacob*, God of the wrestling, struggling soul which strives after Thee, and turn Jacob into Israel, prevalent with Thee, a prince of Thy kingdom, a spectator of Thy glory. Be our *Defender* in our contests with the enemy who would fain keep us back from Thee; and if we be unworthy to make our petition, *look upon the face of Thine Anointed*, as He stands, our great High Priest, before the mercy-seat, and for His dear merits, grant the longing of our hearts. And while some dwell on the word *face* in this verse as especially denoting the Manhood of CHRIST, by which He became known to His brethren, others, especially of the Eastern Fathers, apply the words to Christians, who are the body of the LORD, members of Him, flesh of His Flesh, and who have put on Him at Baptism; and thus interpret the

Hengsten-  
berg.

Ewald.

R. Ishaki.

Honorius.

P.

S. Basil.  
Theodoret.

L.



- words of a prayer that the FATHER will behold His SON in us, and be gracious to us for His sake. Or, as the FATHER always looks upon CHRIST the SON, CHRIST desires us to pray that He may so look on Him as to cause Him to be looked upon by others, to be known, believed, and worshipped by them, so that men may go from strength to strength, till they at last see the God of gods in Sion. So again, we may take the words as our own prayer to our dear Master Himself, Who hath made us His *Anointed*, with regal and sacerdotal unction, true kings and priests, and then the cry is that He, Who hath given us so much, may give us more. Thus, one of His truest servants exclaims :

S. Thomas  
Aquín. The  
Rhythm,  
*Adoro Te.*

JESU, Whom thus veiled I must see below,  
When shall that be granted which I long for so;  
That at last beholding Thine uncovered face,  
Thou wouldst satisfy me with Thy fullest grace?

10 For one day in thy courts : is better than a thousand.

11 I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God : than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness.

- C. *Better*, because the *one day* of Heaven hath neither yesterday nor to-morrow, because no night dims its brightness, no end overtakes it. Observe too, that the words may not be merely applied in general fashion to the attractions of God's service in His Church here on earth, to the Jew of old, or the Christian now, but they may be taken in a special way as looking to CHRIST's first Advent. The number *a thousand* not only stands often in Scripture to denote totality and perfection, and thus a dispensation of God, but it almost precisely marks the number of years which elapsed from the completion of Solomon's Temple till the Nativity of the LORD; only one day in the sight of God. But the single day on which the heavenly hosts chanted their anthem over the manger in Bethlehem was better than all the festivals and rejoicings of the Mosaic code in its fourteen centuries of previous existence. *A door-keeper*. Literally, *I had rather stand on the threshold*. But the Prayer Book version gives the true sense. This is a Korhite Psalm, and the descendants of Korah were, in fact, porters, and "keepers of the gates of the tabernacle, and keepers of the entry," as well as being permitted to swell the chorus of the inspired singers of Israel. On the love which the Saints have shown for the lowliest tasks in God's house, let us hear S. Paulinus of Nola :

Bossuet.  
1 Chron. ix.  
19.

In Natali  
S. Felicis.

Illíc dulce jugum, leve onus, blandumque feremus  
Servitium sub te Domine, etsi justus iniquis  
Non egesset : tamen et patiére et amabis  
Qualescunque tibi, Christo donante, dicatos,



Et foribus servire tuis, tua limina mane  
Mundicie curare sines, et nocte vicissim  
Excubiis servire piis et munere in isto  
Claudere promeritam, defesso corpore, vitam.

There easy yokes, light burden, service soft  
We shall have with Thee, LORD, although no need  
Hast Thou, the Righteous, of ungodly slaves ;  
But Thou wilt suffer and wilt love all those  
Vowed to Thee by CHRIST's gift to serve at morn,  
Cleansing Thy gates and thresholds, and at night  
Keeping pure watch by turns, and in this charge  
Closing a holy life with worn-out frame.

Even heathens were not insensible to this kind of happiness.  
The Greek poet makes his hero sing, as he sweeps the threshold of Apollo's temple :

καλὸν γε τὸν πόνον, ὃ  
Φοῖβε, σοὶ πρὸ δόμων λατρεύω  
τιμῶν μαντείον ἔδραν  
κλεινὸς δ' ὁ πόνος μοι,  
θεοῖσιν δούλων χερ' ἔχειν,  
οὐ θνατοῖς, ἀλλ' ἀθανάτοισ.  
εὐφάμοις δὲ πόνοις μοχθεῖν  
οὐκ ἀποκάμνω.

Euripid. Ion.  
128.

A pleasant task, O Phœbus, I discharge  
Before thine house, in reverence of thy seat  
Of prophecy, an honoured task to me,  
To give my hand in service of the gods,  
Not unto mortals, but immortal ones,  
And labouring in such blessed tasks as these  
I weary not.

And in the humility of this saying of the Korhites, which contrasts so forcibly with the grasping ambition of their fore-  
father, we have a type of Christian holiness, repentant for Adam's transgression, and eager to yield the humblest obedience to God. The LXX. and Vulgate, looking rather to the spirit than the letter, translate, *I had rather be cast down in the house of the Lord.* And hence they draw the lesson that this can be spoken only of suffering in the Church Militant on earth, because no one can be cast down in the Church Triumphant. But this applies only to the Vulgate reading. The Hebrew verity does not exclude the notion of content with the humblest station in heaven, beside the warders of its gate, far below the seats of the loftier powers, for "one star differeth from another star in glory."

Bossuet.

Ay.

1 Cor. xv.  
41.

Amidst the happy chorus  
A place, however low,  
Shall show us Him, and showing  
Shall satiate evermo.

Bern. Clun.  
Rhythmus.



P. *Than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness.* That is, than to hold any station, however high, in the mere transitory and unsettled dignities of the world; *tents*, because of their fragility and temporary nature; *of ungodliness*, by reason of the vices of courts. Hence they take occasion to remind us of those persons of lofty rank and great power, now numbered among the Saints, who descended the steps of thrones and quitted the chambers of palaces, to serve the LORD in the bare cell of a cloister, in the coarse garb of a Religious. It is a glorious catalogue, from the many royal English Saints, Kenred and Ethelred of Mercia, Ina and Sigebert, Etheldred, Eanswith and Sexburga, Edith and Ethelfled, and the memory of S. Radegund and S. Jane in France, of S. Elizabeth in Germany, down to the later records of the great Emperor Charles V., and two centuries further on, Louise de Valois, who fled from the most luxurious court in Europe to the stern discipline of the Carmelites.

Le Blanc.

18 For the LORD God is a light and defence : the LORD will give grace and worship, and no good thing shall he withhold from them that live a godly life.

The first clause here is more truly and vigorously turned by the A.V. as also by Aquila and Symmachus, *The Lord God is a sun and a shield*, for in His dealing with His Saints, it is evermore according to His true promise that "upon all the glory shall be a defence." But the LXX. and Vulgate translate, *God loveth mercy and truth*. This comes mystically to the same thing, as an old commentator says very well, for God, in that He is our *sun*, is full of *mercy*, as it is written, "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good:" in that He is our *shield*, He is *truth*, for it is written in another place, "His faithfulness and truth shall be thy shield and buckler." Thus His mercy enlightens us in the illuminative way, and His truth crowns us in the unitive.

A. Because He loveth *mercy*, He comes to our aid; because He loveth *truth*, He will give us what He promises; as He showed in His dealings with His great Apostle, "who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," that in him "JESUS CHRIST might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." He gave him *grace*, for it is written, "By the grace of God I am what I am." He gave him *glory*, for he saith "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day." When it is said He will *withhold no good thing* from them that live a godly life, we are to bear in mind that only spiritual good things are intended. Temporal good things, which may be evils in disguise, are by no means either always promised or bestowed. Earthly

Isa. iv. 5.  
Ric. Cenom.  
S. Matt. v. 45.  
Ps. xci. 4.  
Honorius.  
1 Tim. i. 13, 16.  
1 Cor. xv. 10.  
2 Tim. iv. 8.  
Ay.



riches may be seen abundantly with robbers, with ungodly sinners, with men steeped in the worst crimes of profligacy and violence, but these have no real wealth. As the world calls no man poor who has a chest full of gold, so Saints call no man poor who has a heart full of *innocence*, and to whom God has given the Death of His SON. From such He will withhold no good thing, for it is written by the Apostle, "He that spared not His own SON, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" *A godly life.* The Vulgate reads *innocence*, and the commentators dwell on its various tokens and attributes. But one, pointing to S. Jerome's rendering, *perfection* (which is also that of Aquila and Symmachus, and the Targum) seasonably reminds us that innocence by itself is but one imperfect virtue, and needs prudence as its complement, according to that saying of the LORD, "Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." A.  
Rom. viii.  
32.  
Ric. Cenom.  
S. Matt. x.  
16.

13 O LORD GOD of hosts : blessed is the man that putteth his trust in thee.

And that by fully-formed hope, as Isaiah confesseth, "For the LORD is a GOD of judgment, blessed are all they that wait for Him." So too it is written in another place, "Did any ever trust in the LORD, and was confounded? or did any abide in His fear, and was forsaken? or whom did He ever despise, that called upon Him?" D. C.  
Isa. xxx. 18.  
Eccclus. ii. 10.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD GOD of Hosts ; glory be to the SON, His Anointed, on Whose Face He ever looketh ; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the light and defence of the Saints.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

O Everlasting GOD, builder of the heavenly tabernacles, appoint, we beseech Thee, goings-up in our hearts, whereby we may without falling back into sin ascend to Thy tabernacles. Through. (1.) Ludolph.

O GOD, the defender of them that trust in Thee, save us who abide in Thy service, that separated from the tents of the ungodly, we may be fitted to dwell in Thy holy house. Through. (1.) Ludolph.

O GOD of Hosts, whose tabernacles are amiable, and whose courts are beauteous, within the circuit whereof holiness walketh, and godliness rejoiceth ; grant that our souls may long after them more eagerly, wherein one day is known to shine better than a thousand ; let us, we pray Thee, be brought in thither, however lowly, that we be not utterly



cast out; that in our new bodies our pure hearts may rejoice with perpetual gladness in Thee the living God; and gladly through ages after ages offer praise to Thee in sweet strains and loving service. (11.)

D. C. O God, our strong Helper, we pray Thee that Thy might may be with us in the valley of weeping; teach us so to appoint goings-up in our hearts, that going from strength to strength, Thou mayest vouchsafe us gladly to see Thee, the God of Gods, in the heavenly Sion. Through. (1.)

## PSALM LXXXV.

TITLE. To the Chief Musician; A Psalm for the sons of Korah. LXX. and Vulgate: To the end; for the sons of Kore, a Psalm.

### ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST vouchsafed to show us His mercy by His coming in the body. The Voice of the Prophet to the SON. Then the Apostolic Voice of the LORD concerning the new people, who are redeemed by the LORD. The Apostolic Voice to the new people.

VEN. BÉDE. This Psalm, about to speak of the first coming of the SAVIOUR, is suited to the person of them who have believed in Him with sincere mind. In the first part of the Psalm the Prophet briefly gives thanks to the LORD, because from that old time of the Jewish nation, the people have come to the worship of the LORD the SAVIOUR. *Lord, Thou hast become gracious unto Thy land.* The second narrates how the LORD vouchsafed to allay His wrath against the Jewish people, and desires the coming of CHRIST, wherein human blessedness hath received the light of faith. *Thou hast taken away all Thy displeasure, &c.* In the third part he turns his words to himself, and in the spirit of prophecy foretells the coming of the WORD made flesh. *I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me, &c.*

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of the sons of Korah. Concerning the reward and salvation given to them by the LORD, and a prophecy of CHRIST.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A prophecy of CHRIST, and of those redeemed by Him.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of thanksgiving.

### VARIOUS USES.

*Monastic.* Thursday: II. Nocturn. } [Christmas Day: II. Noct.  
*Gregorian.* Friday: Matins. } Sacred Heart: III. Noct.]  
*Ambrosian.* Wednesday of Second Week: I. Nocturn.  
*Parisian.* Tuesday: Lauds. [Christmas Day: II. Nocturn.]  
*Lyons.* Friday: Compline. [Christmas Day: II. Nocturn.]



*Quignon.* Saturday: Compline.  
*Eastern Church.* Second Psalm of Nones.

## ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* Thou hast blessed, \* O LORD, Thy land. [Christ-mas Day: Truth hath sprung up out of the earth, and righteousness hath looked down from heaven. *So in all the other uses.* Sacred Heart: The LORD will show loving-kindness, and He shall speak peace unto His people.]

*Monastic.* The same.

*Ambrosian.* As Psalm 82.

*Parisian.* I will hearken \* what the LORD GOD will say concerning me: for He shall speak peace unto His people and to His Saints.

*Mozarabic.* LORD, Thou wilt turn again and quicken us, \* and Thy people shall rejoice in Thee.

1 LORD, thou art become gracious unto thy land: thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob.

Whereas it was aforetime said to the first man, "Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return," and also, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake;" and a certain Prophet hath said, "There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land: cursing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery are poured forth upon the earth, and blood toucheth blood;" now, on the other hand, that the SON of GOD hath shone upon us by His Incarnation, He hath mended all things, and filled the earth with blessing instead of cursing, seeing that temples of God are erected in all parts of the earth, and the fertilising waters of Baptism are poured over its arid soil. The LORD hath *blessed the earth*, that is, the whole of mankind, by taking earth to Himself, and making of it His holy Flesh, and He hath especially blessed one part of it, that garden inclosed, His own most blessed Virgin Mother, who brought forth the fruit of salvation. He is gracious also and gives blessing to every faithful soul which yields itself to His husbandry, "for the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God." *Thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob.* That *captivity* is the bondage of original sin, whereby man lay fettered in the chains of the devil, but now, saith the LORD of Hosts, "He shall let go My captives, but not for price or reward," for CHRIST hath *turned away the captivity*. Not, however, of all, but only of *Jacob*; that is, of the younger people, of all who are by true faith descendants, spiritual or lineal, of Abraham, of all who do not remain in slumber, but rise and wrestle against their sins.

Eusebius.  
 Gen. iii. 19,  
 LXX.  
 Ibid. 17.  
 Hosea iv. 2,  
 LXX.

S. Bruno  
 Carth.

Ric. Hamp.  
 Hugo Card.  
 Heb. vi. 7.

B.  
 C.  
 Hugo Card.  
 Isa. xlv. 13.  
 A.

Hugo Card.

2 Thou hast forgiven the offence of thy people: and covered all their sins.



- A. This, then, is the true explanation of the previous verse, teaching us what is the hardest of all captivity, what the most perfect of all freedom. And observe that the word *forgiven* denotes the bounty of God's grace. He is not spoken of as accepting payment of our debt, but as remitting it freely. *And covered all their sins*, by plunging them beneath the waters of baptism, so that our guilt, original and actual, lies hidden beneath those waves, as the Egyptian foes of Israel did under the waters of the Red Sea. He does not merely *cover* them, leaving them still there, albeit hidden, but takes them away altogether. As, remarks a great teacher, fire covers the blackness of coal, when it has once made its way into the substance of the coal, and destroys it in the very act of so doing, so the fire which the LORD came to send on the earth takes away that sin which causes it to be said of the fallen, "Their visage is blacker than a coal." This, then, is His tender love, that "charity which shall cover the multitude of sins." Others will have it that *forgiven* refers to the general remission in baptism, *covered* to the subsequent pardon in confession, or, once more, that the former term applies to grave and deliberate guilt, the latter to casual and venial sins.
- C. S. Bruno Carth. Hugo Card. Didymus.
- S. Albertus Magnus.
- S. Luke xii. 49.
- Lam. iv. 8.
- 1 S. Pet. iv. 8.
- Hugo Card.
- L.

3 Thou hast taken away all thy displeasure : and turned thyself from thy wrathful indignation.

- Haymo. For *taken away*, the Vulgate reads *mitigated*, and from this some of the Latin commentators take occasion to remark that God does still punish us for our sins, but gently, and not beyond our endurance; and that He does not give us everything here, so that we may have somewhat better to look for hereafter. And whereas it is said *all Thy displeasure*, we are to understand on the one hand God's wrath against both original and actual sin; and on the other His temporal and eternal punishments. Observe that in these three verses we have six blessings of God set forth in six words. Thou hast *blessed* the land, LORD JESU, by Thy birth; Thou hast *turned* the captivity by Thy preaching; Thou hast *forgiven* our offence by Thy dying; Thou hast *covered* all our sins by Thy Resurrection; Thou hast *taken away* Thy displeasure by sending the HOLY SPIRIT, Thou hast *turned* Thyself from wrathful indignation, by leading us to heaven, and averting from us the terrors of the Doom. And that because the offering of the immaculate Lamb is sufficient ransom for the whole world, so that no penalty will remain to be exacted from such as accept the salvation which He offers to all. For He stands before His FATHER as our High Priest, and pleads on our behalf with prevalent intercession, as He spake Himself in the person of His Prophet: "Remember that I stood before Thee to speak good for them, and to turn away Thy wrath from them."
- S. Bruno Carth. B. S. Albertus Magnus. Honorius.
- Bellarmino.
- Ay.
- Jer. xviii. 20.



4 Turn us then, O GOD our SAVIOUR : and let thine anger cease from us.

Here we learn that this Psalm is not altogether one of rejoicing, but that troubles and distresses force Israel to cry to their LORD, by the memory of His former and His recent bounties, to complete His work of salvation, and grant a final deliverance to His people. Wherefore it seems most probable that the Psalm belongs to that period, just after the first return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem, when they were sorely harassed by the neighbouring tribes, and foresaw a fresh series of Divine chastisements. Cassiodorus will have it that the Prophet here, after giving thanks to GOD for the promised Incarnation of the SAVIOUR, looking onward into the future, sees the rejection and crucifixion of Him by the Jews, and prays that these new sins may be pardoned also, and that the blasphemers may be turned, like Saul of Tarsus, into saints. *Turn us*, too, who have so ill requited Thy great bounty, from cursing to blessing, from captivity to freedom, from a bent towards sin to forgiveness, from continuance in sins to their covering and overwhelming. Make us, too, defenders of Thy Church which we have persecuted, preachers of the Word we have blasphemed, disciples instead of gainsayers.

Theodoret.  
Lyranus.  
Neh. iv. 7.

Ċ.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

Honorius.

5 Wilt thou be displeased at us for ever : and wilt thou stretch out thy wrath from one generation to another ?

Not *for ever*, as GOD's displeasure means the punishment He inflicts on us for our sins. He made us, therefore, mortal and passible in Adam, but by renewing us in CHRIST, and giving us a promise of sharing His immortality and impassibility, He has shown us that His displeasure will pass away ; "for as in Adam all die, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive." *From one generation to another*. GOD might appear to the Jewish exiles to do this by delaying to send the Messiah as their Deliverer, by allowing a fresh generation to pass away without beholding the King in His beauty. We, too, may feel a doubt as to His entire good-will towards us, and fear lest He should visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, but we have His own word, "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." Again, we may take the two generations to refer to the two great eras of man's spiritual history, that which dates from Adam to CHRIST, including the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, and that from the Nativity of CHRIST, the Gospel dispensation, under which we live. We therefore beseech GOD not to be wroth with us as He was with that former generation, because we, though liable

A.

1 Cor. xv.  
22.

Hugo Card.

Honorius.

Ezek. xviii.  
20.

C.



to fall into sin, desire to wash away its stains in baptism and confession, and to be reconciled to Him.

6 Wilt thou not turn again, and quicken us : that thy people may rejoice in thee ?

Ay.

The LXX. and Vulgate do not read this verse as a question, but state it as a prophecy. Thou *wilt* turn again, and Thy people *shall* rejoice in Thee. When a man is turned from us, we do not see his face, and cannot surely recognise him, but when he turns round and shows his face, we know him at once. So, before the Incarnation of CHRIST, God was, as it were, turned away from man, "for no man hath seen God at any time ;" but He turned His face towards us in the Incarnation, which is the cause of our justification and spiritual life, whereby we are quickened. Thus, when Peter fell, he continued in his denial till the LORD turned and looked on him, and that one look quickened his dead heart, and brought a flood of penitential tears from the hard rock. And thus too He deals with all other sinners who do not obstinately keep their faces averted from Him, so that they rejoice at last in Him, no longer in the world or in their sins. He does not confine His mercy to this, but He will turn again and show Himself to us in glory at the last day, *quicken* us in the Resurrection, and make us *rejoice* in immortality and blessedness.

S. John i. 18. was, as it were, turned away from man, "for no man hath seen God at any time ;" but He turned His face towards us in the Incarnation, which is the cause of our justification and spiritual life, whereby we are quickened. Thus, when Peter fell, he continued in his denial till the LORD turned and looked on him, and that one look quickened his dead heart, and brought a flood of penitential tears from the hard rock. And thus too He deals with all other sinners who do not obstinately keep their faces averted from Him, so that they rejoice at last in Him, no longer in the world or in their sins. He does not confine His mercy to this, but He will turn again and show Himself to us in glory at the last day, *quicken* us in the Resurrection, and make us *rejoice* in immortality and blessedness.

S. Luke xxii. 61.

Hugo Card.

S. Bruno Carth.

Honorius.

7 Show us thy mercy, O LORD : and grant us thy salvation.

D. C.

A.

These words, so familiar in the daily office of the English Church, which applies them to ferial use instead of their former employment in the festival preces of the Sarum rite, are interpreted universally by the Fathers as a prayer for the manifestation of CHRIST. And our Anglican use in this particular carries out a precept here laid down by the Ecstatic Doctor, who observes : We also ought suitably to use this verse daily in prayer to this effect : Show us, O LORD, Thy mercy, that is, show forth clearly and plenteously in us the working of Thy loving-kindness ; and grant us Thy salvation, that is, Thy healing redemption, or even CHRIST Himself, by giving Him to us daily in the Sacrament of the Altar, and by His spiritual coming unto us to dwell in us, as is written of Him under the name of Wisdom, "Give me Wisdom, that sitteth by Thy throne." Give Him to us, cries S. Augustine, after a burst of rejoicing comment, "Give us Thy CHRIST, let us know Thy CHRIST, let us behold Thy CHRIST, not as the Jews beheld Him, and crucified Him, but as the Angels beheld Him, and rejoice." We may also very fitly explain the verse literally of that perfect salvation which

Wisd. ix. 4.

Bellarmino.



shall be in the Resurrection, for then God will most exactly show us His mercy, so that we may see it, and as it were, touch it, when He shall crown us with His mercy and loving-kindness, and heal all our infirmities, and satisfy our desire with good things, and renew our youth as the eagle. And He will then give us His salvation for an everlasting possession, when He shall manifest Himself to us. Ps. ciii. 3, 5.

8 I will hearken what the LORD GOD will say concerning me : for he shall speak peace unto his people, and to his saints, that they turn not again.

The words *concerning me*, or *in me*, as the LXX. and Vulgate have them, are not in the Hebrew, nor in any way essential to bring out its meaning ; which is that the Psalmist, ceasing from his prayer, keeps silence for a time to wait God's answer by the Spirit, well assured that the answer will be one of peace. The Prophet is here, observes a Greek Father, acting as a herald, proclaiming silence as the King is about to speak, and to make a declaration of peace. So Habakkuk saith : " I will watch to see what He will say in me," and again the Apostle Paul, " Since ye seek a proof of CHRIST speaking in me." Where observe that when CHRIST speaks in a man, He speaks *to* him, and what He speaks on this occasion is that *peace* which passeth all understanding, which is from God the FATHER and His SON JESUS CHRIST, bestowed on all those who render unto God that which is God's, and who are truly *His saints*, because they are converted to Him, not feignedly, but from the depths of their heart. He says, *I will hearken*, because the roar and tumult of the world is all around him, and he must stop his ears to it, in order that he may commune secretly with God, and hear the still, small voice. When evil thoughts arise within us, we speak ourselves ; when good ones do so, it is God Who speaketh in us, our heart uttereth the first and hearkeneth to the second. The *Peace* which God speaks, the Word He utters, is the LORD JESUS Himself, the Prince of peace, the Eternal WORD of the FATHER, thus sent unto mankind. He spake Him to His *people* and to His *saints*, that is, alike to those who served Him, believed in Him, and looked for Him under the old dispensation, and who at last heard the Voice in peace when He preached to their spirits in prison, and bore them from Hades unto Paradise ; to the whole Jewish multitude ; and to those who are more strictly His *saints*, who listened to Him on earth, and loved the Gospel which He taught. So, on the one hand, at His Nativity, the Angels proclaimed " peace on earth to men of good will," embracing all His *people*, Jew and Gentile alike, while He Himself, arisen from the dead, hailed His own chosen disciples with the greeting, " Peace be unto you." *That they turn not again.* Here the

Eusebius.  
S. Athanasius.  
Didymus.

Hab. ii. 1,  
marg.  
2 Cor. xiii. 3.

A.

S. Bernard.

C.

Haymo.

Honorius.

S. Luke ii.  
14.

S. Luke  
xxiv. 36.



- Ric. Hamp. A. V. rightly adds, *to folly*. The intention of the LORD in speaking peace, is that His people may fall no more into vain idolatry, into worldliness and self-will; but may, as they walk in His footsteps, and look to JESUS, the Author and Finisher of their new being, always have their eyes fastened on Eternal Wisdom. But the LXX. reads, He will speak . . . *to them who turn their heart unto Him*, and the Vulgate, nearly alike, *unto them who are converted at heart*. And of these they make a third class, to wit, the Gentiles, who were converted to Him in heart, and abandoning their idols, served Him thenceforward. Cardinal Hugo, applying the whole verse to Christians, observes that the *people* here may well denote the laity, the *saints*, the clergy, and *those converted at heart*, the members of Religious communities. He remarks also that the blessing of peace spoken to the Church is likewise threefold, peace with God, of which is written, "He shall make peace with me;" peace within one's own heart, whereof the LORD saith, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace;" peace with one's neighbour, as the Apostle teacheth, "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." The first of these is necessary to salvation, and is therefore, while addressed to all, specially fitted to the laity; the second, implying freedom from worldly cares and anxieties, befits the clergy, who are provided with ecclesiastical revenues precisely that they may not be mixed up in secular affairs in order to get their living; while the third agrees with the quiet contemplation of the cloister, and the brotherly love which should prevail amongst its inmates. How effectual that speaking of peace was in the first fervour of the Bride's love we easily learn, for we read that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul;" and we find a yet further result, in that CHRIST has knit together in one the saints of earth and those of heaven in one common fellowship, as it is written, "It pleased the FATHER by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." So runs the old Easter hymn:
- S. Albertus Magnus.  
Acts iv. 32.
- S. Fulbert,  
The Hymn,  
Chorus novæ  
Hierusalem.
- He, worthily enthroned as King,  
In splendour now is triumphing,  
The earth below, the sky above,  
He makes one country in His love.

9 For his salvation is nigh them that fear him :  
that glory may dwell in our land.

- A. Therefore He appeared first among the Jews, where there were some at least to *fear Him*, whereas the Gentile world was still given over to idolatry. Yet even the fear was a carnal one, a dread of temporal chastisements and loss, of exile, captivity, famine, or sterility. The Jew asked for just



the same things in prayer as did the Pagan, the one difference was that he asked of the one true God. Nevertheless, even this imperfect knowledge and service was so far rewarded that glory should *dwell in the land*. For there were the Patriarchs and Prophets, there the first temple, there the sacrifices to God, there dwelt the Virgin who bore her LORD, there He Himself was born and manifested in our earthly nature, dwelling in it gloriously, there He walked and wrought His miracles; there He taught His Apostles and founded His Church, and showed such honour to His people that He said of them to the Canaanitish woman, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." His salvation is also nigh them that fear Him, in that they are careful to watch lest they should fall, even when they stand, that at the end of their trial, glory, the glory of immortality, may be in that earth of their now mortal bodies. He makes another glory, that of a good conscience, dwell within His true servants, as the Apostle saith, "For our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience." Some of the Jewish commentators, alleging that the Shechinah, or mysterious presence of God, which was the chief glory of the first temple, was not to be found in the second, but is again to fill the third, which Messiah shall erect, point to a deeper meaning than their own, in the second manifestation in glory of Him on Whom the Apostles looked, with Whom they talked face to face, but Who is now hidden from our eyes till such time as the temple of living stones is completed in the heavens. And yet even here and now, His salvation is nigh them that fear Him, His glory dwells in our land, in that He gives Himself to the faithful to abide within them sacramentally, as He feeds them from His altar with His own Body and Blood. Wherefore it is written, "The Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart." And finally, the glory of holiness and good works done by the saints dwells in the Church, in our land, and shines so before men that they glorify our FATHER which is in heaven.

Ay.

S. Matt.

xv. 24.

Alcuin.

S. Bernard.

Hugo Card.

2 Cor. i. 12,

Vulg.

R. Kimchi.

De Muis.

Deut. xxx.

14.

L.

10 Mercy and truth are met together : righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

"This," comments the great Abbat of Clairvaux, "is a deep mystery, and deserves to be diligently examined, unless understanding fail to cope with the secret, and words fail even the understanding. I fancy, beloved, that I see man in the first beginning of his creation, clothed with these four virtues, and, as the Prophet saith, clad in the garment of salvation. For the entirety of salvation lies in these four, nor can there be salvation without them, especially as they are not even virtues if they be parted from one another. . . . But man, to his own great hurt, and of his folly, went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, by whom, as we

S. Bernard.

Serm. de

Annunc.

S. Luke x.

30.



Gen. ii. 17;  
iii. 3, 4.

Ps. lxxvii. 7.

Z.

read first of all, he was stripped of his garments. Nor could he be clad again, or recover his stolen garments, until CHRIST should lose His. See then, if it be not on account of these four parts of the garment which the first and old man lost, that the garments of the Second and new Man were divided into as many. . . . Man lost *righteousness* when Eve obeyed the serpent's voice, and Adam the woman's, rather than the Divine one. He lost *mercy*, in that Eve, to satisfy her desire, spared neither herself, nor her husband, nor her children, but bound all alike under the terrible curse and necessity of death. And Adam himself exposed the woman, for whom he had sinned, to the Divine wrath, trying to shun the arrow as it were behind her back. Woman and man lost *truth*, the first by perverting the warning she had heard, from 'Thou shalt surely die' into the milder 'Lest ye die,' and so to the serpent's 'Ye shall not surely die;' while Adam offered a vain and false excuse. And, lastly, they lost *peace*, for there is no peace to the wicked, saith the LORD. Hence, after the fall, there was, as it were, a serious conflict between the four virtues, for truth and justice were for punishing the wretched sinner, while peace and mercy, less jealous, were for sparing him; and as the two former persevered in avenging, in scourging the rebel, and in aggravating present troubles with the threat of future punishment, the two latter withdrew into the FATHER'S Heart, returning to the LORD Who gave them. For He alone thought thoughts of peace, when all things seemed full of affliction. And hence mercy kept not silence within Him, but in loving whisper addressed His Fatherly tenderness, saying, 'Will the LORD absent Himself for ever, and will He be no more intreated? Is His mercy clean gone for ever; and is His promise come utterly to an end for evermore?' And although the FATHER long and in manifold ways appeared to hide His compassion, that He might meanwhile satisfy the jealousy of truth and righteousness, yet the importunity of the pleaders was not fruitless, but was heard at the fitting time." Then the Saint continues, representing the pleadings and counterpleadings of the opposing virtues, and the final decision of the Judge, that the rights of all could be secured only in one way, by a perfectly holy death, suffered for love's sake, and without any fault in the victim, so that the meeting and the kiss took place on Calvary at the Cross. How the four virtues, parted in the first man, met again in the Second, we may readily learn. For CHRIST showed *mercy* in healing the sick, *truth* in teaching and speaking. The *justice* of CHRIST appeared in His righteous judgment, when He reproved the wicked, and praised men endued with holiness; and *peace* in His meekness and gentleness. Further, the Divine nature of CHRIST, which hath the power of forgiving sins and healing infirmities, may be called *mercy*; and His human nature *truth*, because there was no guile found in His mouth, and



because He alone truly preserved that dignity and likeness of man whereby he was made after the image of God, and because He was Very Man, and no mere vision. And the phrase *met together* means, were blended in one, that is, united in one Person. *Righteousness* also is taken to be the Divine nature, for God alone is the righteous Judge. *Peace*, on the other hand, stands for the human nature, on account of CHRIST's noble and innate meekness. Again, mercy and truth met together in the Incarnation, because it was mercy which drew the LORD down to His creatures, that the truth of the promises made to the Fathers of the old Covenant might be fulfilled, that the claims of justice might be satisfied by the obedience of the SON, and that He might make peace between God and man, giving man again that righteousness and peace with God which he had lost by his sin; and might, moreover, blend in one dispensation the strictness of the Law and the gentleness of Grace.

Haymo.  
Lyranus.

Ay.

11 Truth shall flourish out of the earth : and righteousness hath looked down from heaven.

This is the verse which, in its Vulgate form of the past tense, supplies the Antiphon for the Psalm in its use throughout the Western Church on Christmas Day. *Truth*, the Very Truth, the SON of God, *hath sprung out of the earth*, hath been born of His Virgin Mother; *Righteousness looked down from heaven* when the Eternal WORD stooped from His throne of glory and united Himself in hypostatic union to the nature of man. Thus was fulfilled that prophetic prayer, "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation." That earth, that Virgin soil, is lowly, stable, fertile, and thirsting for the showers of Divine grace.

Brev. Rom.  
Sarisb.  
Paris. etc.

A.

C.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Isa. xlv. 8.

For GOD in earth she is the royal throne,  
The chosen cloth to make His mortal weed;  
The quarry to cut out our Corner-stone,  
Soil full of, yet free from, all mortal seed;  
For heavenly Flower she is the Jesse Rod,  
The child of Man, the parent of a God.

Robert  
Southwell.

And an ancient Rabbinical gloss on this verse, dwelling on the word *flourish* or *spring*, and interpreting the passage of the coming of Messiah, gives as the reason why the term *born* is not here used, that Messiah's birth will be miraculous, and out of the usual course of human generation. There is yet another sense in which the words hold good. Now that man has been brought near to God, he is moved to confession of his sins, so that the truth springs up in frank acknowledgment of transgressions from the sinner who is but

R. Moses,  
apud  
Titelman.

A.



earth, and righteousness then looks down from heaven to pardon and wash away his offences.

12 Yea, the LORD shall show loving-kindness :  
and our land shall give her increase.

Bellarmino. The Psalmist proceeds to explain the mystery of the Incarnation, and shows that Truth will spring out of the earth, not in the manner that fruits spring out of ground ploughed and sown by the labour of man, but as flowers spring up in open plains without human culture, by the rain from heaven and the sunbeams which fall upon them. For, saith he, *the Lord shall show loving-kindness*, that is, shall send His HOLY GHOST from heaven, to overshadow the Virgin, and so our land, untilled, unsown, and altogether virgin undefiled, *shall give her increase*. Wherefore He saith Himself in the Canticles, "I am the Flower of the plain, and the Lily of the valley." Or again, the Divine nature of CHRIST is the *loving-kindness* of God, the human nature is *the fruit of our land*. But many of the early commentators are content to see here the result of CHRIST's coming, in the fruits of penitence and good works put forth by men under the genial rays of the Sun of Righteousness, when the rain of tears poured forth in sorrow for sin has caused the good seed sown in their hearts by the Sower to spring up and yield increase. It is to be noted that the literal sense of the verse has caused the use of this Psalm in the Western Office for the Benediction of Crops.

Cant. ii. 1.

Cd.

S. Athanasius.  
Didymus.  
A.  
C.

13 Righteousness shall go before him : and he shall direct his going in the way.

The meaning of the latter clause of this verse comes out more clearly in the LXX., *shall make His steps into a way*, that is, shall go behind Him as well as before, deepening, as it were, His track, that they who follow may not miss it. Observe, that where righteousness goes first, God steadily follows, and therefore most fitly did John Baptist, a type of righteousness, act as the forerunner of CHRIST, and prepare a way for Him in the wilderness of man's sin by preaching the baptism of repentance. Others take it that when righteousness hath so prepared the way for CHRIST, then He will Himself set His feet upon the road, and come to visit those who have thus made ready for His coming, as they clear the ground of all stones and thorns, and strew their garments and palm-branches in His path, crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David." He makes this road thenceforward a way for all those who would follow Him; and even in the works of penitence, He who did no sin was not content to be preacher only, but He gave us an example by His vigils, fasts, journeyings and other bodily toils. However, not a few suppose

Hugo Card.

Arnobius.

Pseudo-Hieron.

Ay.



that righteousness is spoken of here not as going before CHRIST, but before His people, or any who have turned to Him, to show them the way to Him, and to set their feet in it, that they may not err. And thus it is said by the Prophet of those who keep the true spiritual fast of charity, "Thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward." Yet once more, a mean interpretation between these two is found by taking righteousness here to mean CHRIST Himself, Who went before His people as Leader and Example, and set His feet first in the way of sorrow and of holiness, of death and resurrection, that His disciples might follow confidently, *in the Way*, in likeness to Him, in union with Him, from Egypt through the Red Sea, traversing the wilderness, crossing Jordan, till at last they reach their Country.

S. Athanasius.  
Agellius.

Isa. lviii. 8.

Ric. Hamp.  
Bellarmine.

Where our banner leads us,  
We may safely go ;  
Where our Chief precedes us,  
We may face the foe.

J. M. Neale,  
*Easter  
Carols.*

His right Arm is o'er us,  
He will guide us through ;  
CHRIST hath gone before us,  
Christians, follow you.

And therefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, Who speaketh peace unto His Saints ; glory be to the SON, in Whom mercy and truth are met together ; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Loving-kindness of the LORD.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

# COLLECTS.

Forgive, O LORD, the offences of Thy people, and show us Thy mercy, to lead us, with righteousness going before, in the way of peace. Through. (1.)

Turn us, O GOD of our salvation, and take away Thy wrath from us, and grant Thy people that peace which Thou speakest, that they may rejoice in Thee, and understanding Thy salvation by Thy safe-keeping, may learn Thy mercy in prosperous seasons and receive Thy loving-kindness in the plenteousness of fruits. (11.)

Turn Thy face, O LORD, from our sins, and put away all Thy wrath and anger from us ; grant peace unto Thy Church, and mercifully blot out all our iniquities, put away the guilt of our pleasures from before Thine eyes, and graciously lend Thine ear to our confessions, and grant us the medicine of pardon. (11.)

Show us Thy mercy, O LORD, and fill Thy people with gladness as it waits for Thee, that Thou mayest do away the

Mozarabic.

Mozarabic.

Mozarabic.



offence of Thy servants, and assuaged from Thine indignation mayest cover our sins. (11.)

D. C. O LORD GOD, we humbly intreat Thy mercy, do away the offence of Thy people, put from us the wrath of Thine indignation, quicken us with Thy loving power and Thy strong right hand, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee with peace both now and evermore. Through. (1.)

## PSALM LXXXVI.

TITLE. A Prayer of David.

### ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, good and gracious, may hear the desires of them that beseech Him. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER. During the Fast. A Prophecy concerning CHRIST, and counsel always to pour forth prayer to GOD. Concerning laudable prayer.

VEN. BEDE. *David*, signifies the LORD the SAVIOUR: either because the interpretation thereof is held to be, strong of hand and desirable, or because He Who is GOD over all, blessed for ever, derived from David's stem.

Throughout the whole Psalm the LORD JESUS CHRIST makes His prayer: in the first portion uttering words which can clearly be applied to Him only, *Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, &c.* In the second part, He prays yet more humbly for His members, whose Head He is: *Teach Me Thy way, O Lord.* In the third portion, He utters again in His own person what specially belongs to Himself: *O God, the proud are risen against Me.*

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, when he built a house unto the LORD, and a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles. Further, a special prayer of a righteous man.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A Prayer of David, and a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of address, of prayer, and supplication.

### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian.* Friday: Matins. [Epiphany: II. Nocturn. Sacred Heart: III. Nocturn.]

*Monastic.* Friday: I. Nocturn. [Epiphany: II. Nocturn.]

*Parisian.* Saturday: Compline. [Epiphany: II. Nocturn.]

*Lyons.* Thursday: Sext. [Epiphany: II. Nocturn.]

*Ambrosian.* Wednesday of Second Week: II. Nocturn.

*Quignon.* Friday: Compline.

*Eastern Church.* Third Psalm at Nones.

### ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* As preceding Psalm. [Epiphany: All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship Thee, O LORD. So



*in all the other uses.* Sacred Heart : Thou art good and gracious. O LORD \* and of great mercy unto all them that call upon Thee.]

*Monastic.* Bow down \* Thine ear, O LORD, and hear me.

*Parisian.* Be merciful unto me \* O LORD, for I have called to Thee all the day long.

*Ambrosian.* Preserve Thou my soul, O LORD \* for I am holy.

*Mozarabic.* For Thou, LORD, art good and gracious \* and of great mercy unto all them that call upon Thee.

1 Bow down thine ear, O LORD, and hear me : for I am poor, and in misery.

This Psalm, though bearing the name of David in the superscription, is held by the Greek Fathers, S. Basil and Theodoret, to be of a much later day, and to be probably the composition of Hezekiah. There are two circumstances on the face of the matter which lend weight to this adjudication of it away from David. First, the Psalm, if Davidic, stands alone in this third book of the Psalter, with no companion. Secondly, it is in a considerable degree a cento from earlier Psalms, or at any rate borrows many of its thoughts and phrases from them, and at least three passages are derived from the Pentateuch, and thus it is structurally unlike the original Psalms of the Prophet King. Yet it is a King of Israel who speaks throughout, whether as author of the Psalm, or as having it put in his mouth by one of the Korhite poets, and therefore we may truly say with S. Augustine, that it is our LORD JESUS CHRIST Who prays for us, Who prays in us, and is to be prayed to by us. He prays for us, as our High Priest ; He prays in us, as our Head ; He is prayed to by us, as our God. Let us then recognize our own words in Him, and His words in us. He saith, then, in the form of a servant, and thou, O servant, in the form of thy LORD, sayest, *Bow down Thine ear, O Lord.* He boweth down the ear, if thou lift not up thy neck. For He draweth nigh to the holy, but departeth far from the uplifted, save those humble, whom He hath Himself lifted up. It is not to the rich, but to the *poor and needy*, (Vulg.) to the humble penitent, confessing his sin, and needing mercy, not to him who is full and haughty, who boasteth, as in want of nothing, and saith, "I thank Thee, that I am not as this publican." *Bow down Thine ear*, then, as a kind physician stoops over the couch of a sick man, too feeble to raise himself or to speak aloud, and hear me, pouring my griefs out. It is spoken in the Person of CHRIST, Who asks to be heard, first because of His voluntary humility, so that His FATHER needs to *bow down* to Him ; and next, because of His voluntary poverty, *poor*, in having no help from friends ; *needy*, as lacking all earthly riches.

Z.

A.

S. Luke  
xviii. 11.  
Theod.  
Mopsuest.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.  
Hugo Card.

2 Preserve thou my soul, for I am holy : my God, save thy servant, that putteth his trust in thee.



- L. Taking these words as the prayer of CHRIST on behalf of His human soul and life, that He might not be slain untimely by His enemies, before He had fulfilled His work; there is no difficulty in the words *I am holy*, for in Him, the Holy One of God, was no sin at all. But how can guilty man take these words upon his lips, and make such a plea to God?
- Titelman. A. Because CHRIST, our Head, is not only Holy in Himself, but is the cause of holiness in others. He hath given us the grace of Baptism and remission of sins, so that, as the Apostle saith, when after speaking of many kinds of sinners, he adds, 1 Cor. vi. 11. "Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our God." Each of the faithful may therefore say, *I am holy*. It is not the pride of conceit, but the confession of gratitude, and the acknowledgment that we have been solemnly dedicated to God's service, and are therefore holy in at least the same sense that the utensils of Divine worship are so. And then, so far from expressing self-confidence, it is an acknowledgment of the increased peril of the Saint, of his greater need of a SAVIOUR, because his very holiness exposes him to more malignant attacks from his spiritual foes. "The enemy," observes one of the most eloquent of early preachers, "aims at the general rather than at the soldier; nor does he beset the dead, but the living; so too the devil seeks not to ensnare sinners, whom he holds already as his subjects, but toils to ensnare the righteous."
- S. Pet. Chrysol. Serm. 96. Bellarmine. Cd. *Save Thy servant*. He asks for salvation, as he had just before asked for preservation and safe-keeping, lest he should lose the gift when bestowed, and then he adds the reason, by saying, *that putteth his trust in Thee*, because when God saves His servant, He is saving His own property; and when He saves a servant that *trusteth* in Him, He proves Himself faithful and just in that He fulfils His promises. And observe how precisely, in this sense, the words agree with Hezekiah's prayer in his sickness: "Remember me, O LORD, I beseech Thee, how I have walked before Thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight." And this reference further points the fitness of the Psalm for its use in the Visitation of the Sick, as prescribed by the Latin Church.
- Thrupp. Isa. xxxviii. 3. Rit. Roman.

3 Be merciful unto me, O LORD: for I will call daily upon thee.

- C. It is one and the same God and Man JESUS CHRIST, Who asks mercy, and Who bestows it; teaching us that God's loving-kindness must be earnestly intreated by perseverance in prayer; as He saith Himself in the Gospel, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." *Daily*, (Symmachus) or with LXX., Vulgate, and margin of A. V., *All the day*. That is, for each of us, prayer at all periods of our lives, in
- S. Luke xviii. 1.



the dawn of youth, in the noon of maturity, in the evening of old age; and again, as *all the day* embraces darkness and light, so our prayer should ascend in adversity and prosperity alike. We may pray with the *whole day* in yet another sense, with clear and enlightened minds, which have cast away the works of darkness. And though each of us cries to God in his own time, and passes away to be succeeded by another, yet each of us, as a member of CHRIST, does but swell the petition that goes up unceasingly from CHRIST's Body, which is, as it were, but one man on earth, crying through *all the day* of this world till the night of the doom cometh, while our Head is, yet more unceasingly, pleading for us in the eternal day of heaven to the FATHER.

C.  
Ay.  
R.  
A.

4 Comfort the soul of thy servant : for unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

It is He Who was forced to say, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," that utters this petition, that His FATHER may *rejoice* (A. V., LXX., Vulg.) His soul by the deliverance of the Patriarchs from Hades, by His own Resurrection, and by the justification of His people through that means. For us, the first and last clause have a close, yet contrasted connection. *Rejoice* the soul which Thou didst first sadden, by leaving it to its own miserable liberty, free to descend into the depths of sin and sorrow, abandoning Thy glorious and happy service; *rejoice* it, because *I have lifted it up* from the earth, where is nought but grief and bitterness, to Thee, where there is pleasure for evermore. Lift up your heart, then, from the earth, as you would your wheat, storing it high up, lest it should rot on the ground. How can I? asks a sinner. What cords, what engines, what ladders do I need? The steps are thine affections, the path is thy will. Thou ascendest by loving, thou descendest by neglect. Standing on earth, thou art in heaven, if thou love God. Note, too, the going-up in these verses, how the ascent is made by prayer. The petitioner is first described as *poor*, then *holy*, next *trusting*, after that *calling*, finally, *lifted up* to God. And each epithet has its fitting verb; *bow down* to the poor, *preserve* the holy, *save* the trusting, *be merciful* to the caller, *rejoice* the lifted-up. It is the whole gamut of love from the Incarnation to the Ascension, it tells us that CHRIST's humiliation will be our glory and joy.

D. C.  
S. Matt.  
xxvi. 38.

R.  
A.  
Alculn.  
Gloss.

5 For thou, LORD, art good and gracious : and of great mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

This is what gave him courage to lift up his soul to receive consolation, for as S. John saith, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all," so we may say, God is *sweet*, (Vulg.) and in Him is no bitterness at all; while on the other hand, there is little sweetness and much bitterness in fleshly conso-

Bellarmino.  
1 S. John  
1. 5.



- lations. And God is not only *sweet*, but *gentle* (Vulg.) so that He does not repel those who approach Him, but endures their imperfection. For He listens to our prayers, however unskillfully worded, and broken by wandering thoughts; nay, receives them graciously, and hearkens to them; whereas a human friend, if he saw his acquaintance, after accosting him, turn away without awaiting reply to his questions, and address some one else; and still more a judge, who found the very man who had appealed to him, turning to gossip with others in court, would never tolerate such discourtesy. Again, God is *good*, in that He deals lovingly with His servants, laying few and easy commands upon them, and helping them by His grace to obey these commands; while He is *gracious*, in that He does not exact the full rigour of just penalty from repentant sinners, but receives them readily back into grace and favour, which is the force of the A. V. *ready to forgive*. And these same attributes are those of which the Apostle makes mention, beseeching his Corinthian disciples "by the meekness and gentleness of CHRIST." *Of great mercy*. His mercy is *great* and *plenteous*, (A. V. Vulg.) because it is sufficient for all sin and all sinners. But copious though it be, He will not waste it, for He reserves it for *all them that call upon Him*. Hence we gather, first the advantage of perseverance in prayer, for we shall be continually heard, and receive mercy if we enrol ourselves in that number, as there is no respect of persons, nor any stinting, with God; and next, what it is we ought to call for. Upon *Thee*, the Psalmist says, and this shows us the meaning of that other saying, "Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer," that there may be a calling in prayer which is no true calling upon God. For you call on the thing you love, for which you are inwardly crying out, which you wish to come to you; it may be money, rank, the death of an enemy; but in that case you are calling on them, not on God, and are making of Him merely an instrument for your appetites, not a hearer to your better longings. Call on God, then, as loving Him, and as desiring Himself, and He will be of great mercy unto you.
- A. Titelman.
- 2 Cor. x. 1.
- Hugo Card.
- C.
- A. Prov. i. 28.

6 Give ear, LORD, unto my prayer : and ponder the voice of my humble desires.

7 In the time of my trouble I will call upon thee : for thou hearest me.

- B.
- S. Albertus Magnus.
- D. C.
- A.
- The Psalmist asks that God may not only *give ear*, that is, mercifully permit the supplicant to approach Him in prayer, and listen to him, but that He will *ponder* or *attend*, that His wisdom may come into operation as well as His mercy, and the two may jointly fulfil the petition to the uttermost. *In the time of my trouble*, as respects CHRIST, is spoken of His suffering life, and especially of His Passion; and as regards Christians it means the whole time of their sorrowful



exile and pilgrimage here on earth, far from their Country, for the more they love and long for that country, the sorer is the daily trouble of the pilgrimage. It is also true of any special persecution, distress, or even of inward temptation, according to that saying of a Saint, Prosperity closes the mouth, adversity opens it. *For Thou hearest me.* The Carmelite reminds us in this place of the prevenient grace of God, which hears our prayers before we utter them, nay, which has heard them from all eternity, foreseeing that they would be offered, and has inspired us with the will and desire of uttering them. Observe, finally, that all the Psalm, down to this point, may be taken as the prayer of CHRIST in His Passion on behalf of His whole Church, for He saith Himself, "I knew that Thou hearest Me always;" but especially "when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard for His piety."

Hugo Card.  
S. Greg. M.  
Ay.

P.  
L.  
S. John xi.  
43.  
Heb. v. 7.

8 Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O LORD : there is not one that can do as thou doest.

If we take this Psalm as the utterance of Hezekiah, these words will form the fitting reply to the insulting message of Rab-shakeh : "Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly, and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed?" The verse, if applied to the FATHER, refutes the Semi-Arians, who asserted that the SON was not Consubstantial with Him, but only a Being of similar substance and nature to God, that is, *like* Him; whereas confession of the co-equality of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST in the Undivided Trinity removes this difficulty at once. We have here, moreover, the reason for taking refuge with God, and for calling upon Him only, because there is none like unto Him, in essence, in power, in wisdom, in goodness; whether amongst men of exalted rank and power, as kings or judges, or amongst the purest saints and loftiest angels. Yet, we are told, "Ye are Gods;" and again, that "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." There is no contradiction, for though we shall reflect His glory, as a pool reflects the sun, we shall not be like Him in essence, for He is eternally and self-existently Almighty, all-wise, all-good, whereas we are but His creatures, deriving our faculties and graces from Him as their source. Even the SON, as speaker in this Psalm, fitly addresses these words to the Everlasting FATHER, because He utters them in the nature of His Manhood, whereby He is inferior to the FATHER, albeit co-equal with Him in Godhead.

Agellius.  
2 Kings xix.  
10.  
Theodore.

S. Athanasius.  
Bellarmine.

Didymus.  
Ps. lxxxii. 6.  
S. John iii.  
2.

Ay.  
S. Greg. M.  
Mor. 10.



Z. *There is not one that can do as Thou doest.* It is the voice of the Church concerning CHRIST. For His created works are not intended only, nor His providence over all His creatures, visible and invisible, but His restoration of His creation, His destruction of the tyrant, His slaying of death, which He effected by His own death, and that successful fishing of the whole world which He wrought by a few mean fishers, not to cite His deeds of miraculous power. *Not one.* And yet He

L. S. John xiv. 12. promised His disciples, "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." But He clears up the difficulty later, saying, "Without Me ye can do nothing." He wrought miracles of His own inherent power, they by derived and commissioned authority.

Acts iii. 12. Accordingly, the Prince of the Apostles saith, "Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; and His Name, through faith in His Name, hath made this man strong."

9 All nations whom thou hast made, shall come and worship thee, O LORD: and shall glorify thy Name.

Theodoret. This, in its literal sense, seems to be looking forward to the effect on the nations around of Sennacherib's overthrow, fulfilled when "many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah, king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth." But it has a deeper significance in foretelling the ingathering of the Gentiles, whence it is used as the Epiphany antiphon to the whole Psalm. The words were uttered, remarks S.

Agellius.

A. Augustine, when but a few, in the one Hebrew nation, worshipped God, and were believed in defiance of sight, and yet now that they are in process of fulfilment, men doubt them. He applies the verse himself to refutation of the Donatists, who held that the true faith of the Catholic Church was limited to one corner of Africa. *All nations*, not only as typified by the Wise Men from the East, but further, by the converts of many peoples and languages, made on the Day of Pentecost; the first fruits of the commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

L. S. Mark xvi. 15. *Whom Thou hast made.* That is, not merely some out of every nation under heaven, but men once more appearing as God made them, in His own image and likeness, now restored and renewed by CHRIST's redeeming grace, not as defaced by the devil and by their own free-will abused to sin. So it is written in another Psalm, "The people which shall be created, shall praise the LORD," created, that is, anew by the supernatural and regenerating grace of CHRIST, for "of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." *Shall come and*

Hugo Card.

L.

Ps. cii. 18,  
A. V.

S. James i.  
18.



*worship Thee.* Not necessarily by bodily motion from one place to another, but by believing, in whatsoever places they are, as is spoken by the Prophet: "Men shall worship Him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen." *And glorify Thy Name.* It is true of the Saints now, who obey the Apostle's precept, "Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." It will be true of all nations at the last day, when, willing or unwilling, they must adore CHRIST sitting on His throne, worshipping Him, some in love and some in fear, but all glorifying His Name, according to the prophecy in the Song of Moses and of the Lamb chanted by the Saints on the sea of glass, saying, "Great and marvellous are Thy works, LORD GOD Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O LORD, and glorify Thy Name? for Thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before Thee, for Thy judgments are made manifest."

S. August.  
Ep. 80.

Zeph. ii. 11.

1 Cor. vi. 20.  
Titelman.

Rev. xv. 3.

10 For thou art great, and doest wondrous things:  
thou art God alone.

This is the reason why the worship of false gods must cease, and why all nations shall come and glorify the LORD, especially in the Day of Judgment, when His marvellous power shall be fully displayed, so that the Apostle dwells particularly on the word *great*, as betokening His manifestation then, saying, "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST." There is, besides, a confession of the Trinity in Unity in the verse. *Thou art great*, applies peculiarly to the Everlasting FATHER, the LORD and Source of all; and *doest wondrous things*, tells us of the SON, by Whom the worlds were created, the mystery of redemption effected, the miracles of the Gospel wrought; *Thou art God*, teaches us that the HOLY GHOST is a Divine Person, not a mere influence or manifestation, while *alone* joins the Three together in One indivisible Godhead.

Tit. ii. 13.

L.

C.

11 Teach me thy way, O LORD, and I will walk  
in thy truth: O knit my heart unto thee, that I may  
fear thy Name.

The LXX. and Vulgate translate, *Lead me in Thy way*, but as Lorinus truly observes, with no variation of meaning from the original, which does not signify the communication of a bare speculative knowledge, but practical instruction, and actual guidance in the paths of God's commandments. *Thy way*, Thy truth, is CHRIST. Therefore the Body goes to Him, and comes from Him. He saith, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." It is one thing for God to lead us to the way, and another to lead us in the way. They who are

L.

A.

S. John xiv.



out of the way are not Christians, or at any rate not Catholics, but are being led towards the way. But when that is done, and they have become Catholics in CHRIST, they are led by Himself in the way itself, that they fall not. And *I will walk in Thy truth*. Some, especially of the Greek Fathers, take these words as contrasted to some extent with the preceding ones, and interpret the *way* as denoting action, and *truth* as signifying contemplation. But it is better to take it as denoting progress in holiness, or as covering the entire ground of a devout life. The prayer is like that of the penitent sinner, asking God to put out His hand to guide him, as a blind and sickly child asks for the help of a wayfarer to put him in the straight road. It is asked, How can words such as these be put into the mouth of CHRIST? They answer, for the most part, that the Head is speaking here for His members, not for Himself, just as He spoke to Saul in the vision near Damascus. But the Carthusian will have it that this is the prayer of the SAVIOUR that His human soul might be led in that way of God which brought it down to the Patriarchs in Hades, thence into Paradise, next to be reunited with His Body in the Resurrection, and finally to be exalted together with it to heaven at the Ascension. *O knit my heart unto Thee*. This version, albeit giving a very deep and beautiful meaning, does not exactly express the original, in which the words *unto Thee* are not found. It is true that the heart may be so knit to God as to be interpenetrated with His fear, as an old poet tells us:

Quarles'  
Schoole of  
the Heart,  
46.

No, self-deceiving heart, lest thou shouldst cast  
Thy cords away, and burst the bands at last  
Of Thy Redeemer's tender love, I'll try  
What further fastness in His fear doth lie.  
The cords of love soaked in lust may rot,  
And bands of bounty are too oft forgot:  
But holy filial fear, like to a nail  
Fastened in a sure place, will never fail.  
This, driven home, will take  
Fast hold, and make  
Thee that thou dardest not thy GOD forsake.

But the A. V., with S. Jerome and Symmachus, gives the correct rendering: *Unite my heart*, make it so whole and undivided that it may entirely love and fear Thee, not partly fear Thee and partly fear the world; nor divide its worship between Thee and other gods; and further, that whereas it is now disturbed and broken up with the waves and storms of passion, trouble, and sin, God may still it, and bring it to a perfect quiet, presenting an unruffled and tranquil surface, like the sea in a great calm. He unites the heart of the whole Church too, by granting it unity of faith towards God and of love towards brethren. But the LXX. and Vulgate read, *Let my heart rejoice, that it may fear Thy Name*. It is lest

Bellarmino.

Trevetus.

L.

Ric. Cenom.



we should be ensnared by over-confidence, the Doctor of Grace warns us, that this is written, lest the excitement of unrestrained joy, even in spiritual things, should cause us to stray from the road. Or, as another great Western Doctor comments, although the Saints are certain, even here, of their hope, yet they have reason to dread temptation, so that joy and fear are mingled in their spiritual experience. So we are to take heed that we do not find written in this place, Let my heart rejoice that it may feel *secure*, but that it may *fear*, in order that between the rejoicing of hope, and the fear of temptation we may be tried and chastened, and feel gladness in God's pardon, yet so as never to forget that we may fall again. We need, as has been well said, to be glad in our victory, but to fear because of the conflict. Yet the Greek Fathers take it in a deeper and more spiritual sense, alleging that the fear of God is itself a source of true and pure delight to His Saints. And thus one of themselves has truly said, "The fear of the LORD is a paradise of delights, but where the fear of the LORD is not, there will the foxes dwell." Only it must not be a servile fear lest God should punish us, which is an impure feeling; but a loving fear, lest He should leave us, which is pure. And with this latter fear even the LORD JESUS, in His Manhood, was filled, so that we may take the words of Him, and explain them in the light of His bitterest cry upon the Cross.

A.

S. Greg. M.  
Mor. xx. 5.

L.

Arnobius.

S. Basil. M.

Z.

S. Ephraim  
Syrus.S. John  
Cass.

D. C.

12 I will thank thee, O LORD my God, with all my heart : and will praise thy Name for evermore.

The Vulgate word here for *give thanks* is, as usual, *confess*, that is, make grateful acknowledgment of bounties. But the Latin commentators constantly take it of confession of sin, and therefore one of them, dwelling here upon that duty, tells us to lay particular stress on the words *with my whole heart*. For the heart, that is, the intellectual part of man's being, is made up of four things, thought or imagination, memory, understanding, and will. Each of these should play its part in a good confession. There ought to be thought, in careful preparation for the Sacrament of penance; memory, in duly recalling former offences; understanding, in a full recognition of the enormity of sin, and the grievousness of one's own faults; will, in the firm resolution to amend. But, taking the words in their more literal signification, we may note that the *whole heart* here is the result of the prayer in the verse before, that God may *unite* the heart. Henceforth it gives thanks to Him under all circumstances, in adversity as well as in prosperity, and puts its entire trust in Him, not confiding partly in temporal successes, and yielding Him but a divided confidence. And as CHRIST, in His human nature, gave us the most perfect example of entire devotion to God the FATHER; these words apply to Him

Hugo Card.

Ay.

D. C.



as well as to His Saints, who plead for blessings to come in the best of all ways, by showing themselves mindful and grateful in respect of past favours. *And will praise Thy Name for evermore.* This *evermore* is threefold. It is the whole life of the pardoned sinner, thenceforth devoted to God's glory and service; it is the continuous life of the Church Militant on earth, wherein, throughout succeeding ages, the praise of God never ceases, so that our Head can speak of this act of His Body as His own; it is, finally, the everlasting Alleluia of heaven, which awaits the Saints who have conquered.

13 For great is thy mercy toward me : and thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell.

Here is the special cause for gratitude. And taking it of the Head, as so many do, we see in it a prophetic thanksgiving for the Resurrection. S. Augustine, dwelling on the word *nethermost*, and arguing fairly that the word implies the existence of at least two hells, urges, that when we take the whole verse of CHRIST, we must interpret the first hell to be this earth, so called from lying so far beneath heaven, and from being so defiled with sin, and harassed with trouble. Into this first hell the LORD came by His Nativity; into the second or *nethermost*, the grave and place of departed spirits, He came by His death, and was *delivered* thence by the Resurrection. But if the words are to be put in the mouth of one of His members, then it is a thanksgiving for being rescued from that part of Hades where the rich man lay in torments, parted by a great gulf from that happier place where Abraham carried Lazarus in his bosom. In that *nethermost* hell no one gives thanks to God, nor can any come forth thence, wherefore deliverance from it is truly *great mercy*, seeing that it confers everlasting blessings. And Euthymius, who ascribes the Psalm to David, in taking the *nethermost* hell to mean the double guilt of adultery and murder into which the king fell, so that deliverance from it means pardon of mortal sin, and may be thus applied to every penitent similarly rescued, has warrant from the Proverbs on his side, wherein the sin of lust is more than once so described. For Prov. vii. 27; ix. 18. the Wise Man saith of a strange woman that "her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death; and again, "her guests are in the depths of hell."

14 O God, the proud are risen against me : and the congregations of naughty men have sought after my soul, and have not set thee before their eyes.

Here is the anticipation of the Passion, of the secret council of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, followed by the cries of the multitude for the Crucifixion of the LORD. And then, spoken of His Body the Church, it is a cry for protection



against heathen persecutors, seeking the lives of Christians, and still more against heretics and false brethren, plotting against that faith which is the very soul of the Church's being. And the individual believer prays in these words to be delivered from the principalities and powers of evil, those ghostly enemies which wage unceasing war against the soul.

Hugo Card.

A.

Ric. Hamp.

15 But thou, O LORD GOD, art full of compassion and mercy : long-suffering, plenteous in goodness and truth.

Here he showeth the cause of this suffering, why God permitted them so to rise against CHRIST, and to deliver Him over to death. And he saith that this was of God's great mercy, Who spared not His own SON, but delivered Him up for us all, so that the Passion of CHRIST was a work of great *compassion and mercy*. And the SON also is here referred to, as voluntarily giving Himself as a sacrifice for us, according to His most true promise ; He Who was *longsuffering*, in that He bore so much for ourselves, plenteous in *goodness*, because He came to save, plenteous in *truth*, because He ever taught the truth, as even His enemies acknowledged, saying, "Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth." And therefore He is styled in the Apocalypse, "Faithful and True."

Ay.

A.

s. Matt.  
xxii. 16.  
Rev. xix. 11.

Note, further, that there are seven names of God set down here, answering to seven of His energies, and as many classes of men with whom He is in certain relations. He is LORD to them who serve Him, and He demands service from all ; as it is written, "The nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish." He is GOD, to them that worship Him, for "the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation." He is *full of compassion*, for "His mercies are over all His works ;" He is *full of mercy*, in that He helpeth the unhappy. He is *longsuffering* with sinners : "Therefore will the LORD wait, that He may be gracious unto you." *Plenteous in goodness*, in bestowing His eternal rewards, for "eye hath not seen, O GOD, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him." And *truth*, in punishing the guilty, for "let God be true, but every man a liar."

Hugo Card.

Isa. lx. 12.

Isa. xix. 21.

Ps. cxlv. 9.

Isa. xxx. 18.

Isa. lxiv. 4.

Rom. iii. 4.

16 O turn thee then unto me, and have mercy upon me : give thy strength unto thy servant, and help the son of thine handmaid.

Because of all the attributes of God enumerated in the previous verse, He is now called on to show His saving power. And the commentators, with almost one voice, agree in explaining this passage of the prayer of CHRIST for His Resurrection. In saying, *Turn Thee unto Me*, or as LXX. and Vulgate have it, *Look again upon Me*, He asks for His

Hugo Card.



- Ps. xxxiv. 15. FATHER's protection, for "the eyes of the LORD are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers." In saying, *Have mercy upon Me*, He asks for deliverance from misery; in adding, *Give Thy strength* (or with Vulg. *empire*) *unto Thy servant*, He asks for judicial power over the world, and that because of His perfect obedience. This He foretold, earlier than His Passion, saying, "The FATHER judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the SON;" and He confirmed it after His rising again, when He said to His disciples, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth." In saying, *Help the Son of Thine handmaid*, He asks for the Resurrection, and that in His character as the offspring of that pure Virgin who answered the Angel's message with the words, "Behold the handmaid of the LORD, be it unto me according to thy word." Several of the Latins dwell on the ambiguous word *puero*, meaning *child* as well as *servant*, here found in the Vulgate, and remind us that it is spoken of Him touching Whom, by reason of His innocence, the Prophet saith: "Unto us a child is born," Who was like a child in His poverty, His holiness, His placability, and His obedience.
- S. John v. 23. Each of His members, too, can utter this prayer, who is God's *servant* and *child* because of adoption and obedience, who is the *son of His handmaid*, the Church, who may look for a share in that *empire* of which the LORD said to His Apostles, "In the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." For the promise is not limited to them, inasmuch as He saith in another place, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne." And although all Christian men are proud to bear the title of servant of God, as all Christian women, like S. Agatha before the prefect, rejoice to call themselves by the name of *handmaid*, yet none is so exactly the son of a handmaid as a convert from the bondage of Paganism, who has entered into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and acquired in Baptism the strength of the HOLY GHOST, strength sufficient to overcome all the spiritual enemies of the soul. Note, moreover, the deep humility of the double expression, *servant*, and *son of Thine handmaid*. They are no mere repetition, for a man may be reduced into a state of servitude from one of freedom, as a captive in war, albeit sprung of noble ancestry; but if he be the son of a handmaid, he is born a slave, and has had no time of liberty to look back upon. And in this sense the children born of the Church, God's faithful handmaid, are His from the first moment of their spiritual creation.
- S. Matt. xxviii. 18. C.
- Isa. ix. 6. S. Albertus Magnus. Hugo Card. R.
- S. Matt. xix. 28. S. Albertus Magnus. Hugo Card. R.
- Rev. iii. 21. L. Ruinart. Act. Sinc.
- A. Bellarmine. Titelman.

17 Show some token upon me for good: that they who hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.



Hitherto he has asked for internal consolation, for secret Bellarmino. bestowal of help; but now he asks for an external sign of favour, to the dismay of his enemies. And, still applying the Psalm literally to Hezekiah, we may bear in mind two such proofs of Divine favour towards him; the destruction of Sennacherib's army, and the going back of the shadow on the sun-dial of Ahaz. The Chaldee, ascribing the Psalm to Targum. David, represents this as a prayer for a miracle, that of the spontaneous opening of the gates of Solomon's temple, to be vouchsafed him for David's sake, when bringing up the ark into its new sanctuary. Applied to CHRIST, the Greek Fa- Didymus. thers prefer to take the *sign* here of the Virgin-birth of the LORD, according to that saying in Isaiah, "The LORD Him- Isa. vii. 14. self shall give you a sign. Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel;" a sign which was truly *for good*, and made the spiritual foes of man *ashamed*. But the Latins take it of the Resurrection, looking to that other saying, "An evil and adulterous generation S. Matt. xii. seeketh after a sign; and there shall be no sign given to it, <sup>39.</sup> but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." *That they who hate Me may see it, and be ashamed*, with that wholesome confusion which leadeth to repentance, that they may be converted and live; or, if they resist obstinately, with the final shame which awaits them at the doom, when the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in heaven, for the good of His servants, and the destruction of His foes. Applying the verse to the Christian soul, they remind us, on the one hand, of that sign of the Cross which fortifies us against evil, and affrays our enemies; and on the other, yet more deeply, that we have been "sealed with that HOLY SPIRIT of promise." And both these meanings appear in that victory of the Church through the sign which Constantine is said to have beheld in heaven, on the eve of his decisive triumph over his Pagan opponent. *Thou, Lord, hast holpen Me, and comforted Me.* Thou hast *holpen* Me in the battle, *comforted* Me amidst the sorrows of the Passion; *holpen* Me when I was in the grave, *comforted* Me in the joy of the Resurrection. And in like manner, the LORD shows a sign upon us for good, whenever He converts sinners by the example of Saints, or works any great deliverance for His people, whom He *helps* in their life-long struggle here, and *comforts* with the everlasting blessedness of heaven.

Wherefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is great, and God alone;  
glory be to the SON, Who is full of compassion and mercy;  
glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who giveth His strength unto His servants.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:  
world without end. Amen.

A.

S. Bernard.  
D. C.

A.

Arnobius.  
S. Greg.  
Nysse.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
Hugo Card.  
Eph. i. 13.

C.

B.

Hugo Card.

Ric. Hamp.



## COLLECTS.

**Ludolph.** Make glad, O LORD, the countenance of Thine household; and deliver our souls from the nethermost hell, that protected by looking upon Thy countenance, we may with spiritual power tread fleshly desires under foot. Through. (1.)

**Ludolph.** Lead us, O LORD, in the way of Thy truth: that we may rejoice in fearing Thee, and give thanks to Thy holy Name, that we may be sealed with good works, and our enemies may be ashamed. Through. (1.)

**Mozarabic.** O good and gracious God, of great mercy to them that call upon Thee, bow down Thine ears to our prayer, and of the abundance of Thy mercy do away our transgressions, and that we creep not prostrate on the ground, set us upright to look on Thee. (11.)

**Mozarabic.** Have mercy on us, O LORD, who cry to Thee all the day long; and be gracious to them that call on Thee in trouble, that when we praise and worship Thy majesty, Thou mayest favourably accept us, and when we fear Thee because of our doings, Thou mayest graciously pardon. Make glad, then, our hearts with obedient fear of Thee, and comfort our doubting minds with the sweetness of Thy consolation. But as Thou art sweet and gracious, let us drink in sweetness from Thine indulgence; and find Thee loving and gracious in bestowing reward. (11.)

**Mozarabic.** O SAVIOUR and LORD, Whom the unrighteous wickedness of them that rose against Thee smote; Whom the congregation of the ungodly, raging with its tongues, crucified; Grant that we may ever follow Thee in the deep mystery of Thy loving-kindness, that, as Thou didst for us bear the Cross and grave, we triumphing therein over a conquered world, may go our way into heaven. (11.)

**Mozarabic.** O LORD our God, save Thy servants, who put their trust in Thee, for Thou art good and gracious, and of great mercy; look upon us, and have mercy on us, that our heart may rejoice in the greatness of Thy Name, may fear Thee so as to be glad; lead us in Thy way, and as we walk in Thy truth, comfort us with Thy help, and help us with Thy consolation. (11.)

**Pseudo-Hieron.** We pray Thee, O LORD, that guarded by the sign of Thy Cross, and kept safe under its guard, we may be delivered from all the snares of the devil. For Thine.

**D. C.** O LORD, lead us Thy servants in Thy way, that we may walk in Thy truth, so that Thy great mercy may bedew us, and Thou mayest deliver our soul from the nethermost hell, and make us to share in everlasting glory. (1.)



## PSALM LXXXVII.

**TITLE.** A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah. Chaldee Targum : A hymn uttered at the hands of the sons of Korah, and a song stablished in the mouth of the ancient fathers.

**ARGUMENT.**

**ARG. THOMAS.** That CHRIST loves the gates of His Church, set upon the holy hills, more than all the tabernacles of Jacob. The Voice of the Apostles touching the Church. The Voice of the Prophet, in the HOLY GHOST, to the Apostles, or their Voice touching the Church. The Voice of the Prophet touching the Heavenly Jerusalem, that is, the Church of CHRIST. The Voice of CHRIST the Holy One to the Apostles touching the Church, and the merits of the Saints.

**VEN. BEDÆ.** *The sons of Korah* signify Christians ; to whom the Prophet proclaims the City of GOD ; to increase their yearning for such glory. Otherwise : Nearly all the Psalms which are inscribed *For the sons of Korah*, are full of rejoicing, for they do not imitate the sins of their fathers, and take to themselves the fire of lust, strange to the LORD, but loving that which the LORD desireth, speak glorious things concerning the City of GOD.

In the first part, the Prophet speaketh to the faithful, proclaiming the Heavenly City. *Her foundations are upon the holy hills.* In the second part, the LORD the SAVIOUR declares her future belief by referring to various names, and reproacheth the Synagogue because she knew not GOD, in Whom the devout faith of the Gentiles believed. *I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know Me, Behold the Philistines, &c.* The third part in one verse toucheth on the blessedness of the world to come, and these parts are divided from each other by the interposition of pauses. *As the dwelling of all rejoicing is in thee.*

**EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA.** The Incarnation of CHRIST, and the exalting of the Gentiles.

**S. ATHANASIUS.** A Psalm of narration.

**VARIOUS USES.**

*Gregorian and Monastic.* Friday : Matins. [Circumcision : II. Nocturn. In the Octave of Epiphany : III. Nocturn. Feasts of B.V.M. : II. Nocturn. Dedication of a Church : II. Nocturn.]

*Monastic.* Corpus Christi : II. Nocturn. Comm. Virgins : II. Nocturn.

*Parisian.* Saturday : Sexts. [Festivals as *Gregorian.*]

*Lyons.* Thursday : Sexts. [Dedication of Church : III. Nocturn.]

*Ambrosian.* Wednesday of Second Week : II. Nocturn.

*Quignon.* Wednesday : Nones.

**ANTIPHONS.**

*Gregorian.* Her foundations are upon the holy hills. [Circumcision and Epiphany : A Man was born in her, and the Most High founded her. Feast of B.V.M. : The habitation of all us rejoicing



ones is as in thee, O holy Mother of God. Dedication: Jacob beheld a ladder,\* and the top of it reached to heaven, and he beheld the angels descending, and said, Truly this place is holy.]

*Monastic.* As preceding Psalm. [Corpus Christi: CHRIST the LORD, thinking upon them that know Him, established them with corn and wine. Comm. Virg.: Draw me, we will run after the perfume of Thine ointments, Thy Name is as oil poured forth. Dedication: This is none other\* than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.]

*Parisian.* GOD is our help,\* therefore will we not fear. [Dedication: He that dwelleth in heaven hath His eye on that place, and defendeth it; and He beateth and destroyeth them that come to hurt it.]

*Mozarabic.* The LORD loveth the gates of Sion\* more than the tabernacles of Jacob.

1 Her foundations are upon the holy hills: the LORD loveth the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

S. Matt. v.  
14.

1 Cor. iii. 9.  
Isa. xiv. 32.

2 Kings xix.  
9; xx. 12.

Isa. xxxix. 1.

2 Kings  
xviii. 8.

A.

Eph. ii. 20.  
1 Cor. iii. 11.

Adam. Vict.  
The Sequence,  
*Stola regni  
laureatus,*  
in Comm.  
Apost.

The LXX. and A.V., more correctly, *His* foundation. The "city that is set on a hill" is "God's building," not man's. And so we read in another place, "The LORD hath founded Zion." The scope of the Psalm is the spread of the knowledge of JEHOVAH amongst the heathen nations around, and from the names specified, it may be most probably ascribed, like the preceding one, to the reign of Hezekiah, after the destruction of Sennacherib's army. Assyria, then the great enemy of Judah, is omitted altogether; but we find Ethiopia (the *Morians*) and Egypt (*Rahab*) which were allies of Hezekiah, in Tirhakah's army; Babylon, from which an embassy of congratulation was sent to the Jewish king; and the Philistines, whom he had finally subdued; all included in the list, with a special fitness inapplicable to any other date in the history of the southern kingdom, though some have tried to find in it a reference to the foundation of the Second Temple. The abruptness of the opening verse, remarks S. Augustine, suggests that something must have preceded, not of necessity uttered aloud, but pondered in the mind of the tuneful citizen, who filled with the HOLY GHOST, and thinking with love and desire of the City, breaks out in this wise, in which he begins to tell us of that heavenly Jerusalem, whose *foundation is upon the holy hills*, the Apostles and Prophets, whose Cornerstone is CHRIST, none other foundation than Whom can any man lay.

These, the Temple's sure foundations,  
These are they that bind the nations  
Into God's great house above:  
These the City's pearly portal,  
Knitting faith with work immortal,  
Jew and Gentile into love.

The word *holy* is not superfluous, but distinguishes the hills



of the mystical Jerusalem from those of the mystical Babylon, which are worldly power and ungodly wisdom. But Babylon has at any rate a solidity and grandeur of its own; not so the frail and temporary dwellings of careless frivolity, shunned by "the heirs of the promise," who even while dwelling in tabernacles, look, as Abraham did, "for a city with foundations, whose builder and maker is God." There are six properties of a foundation, whereby we may see how it is a type of CHRIST.

Sustentat saxis, sine vento, luce, ruina,  
Odit aquas, pondus non sentit, forte, latens, stana.

It props with rocks, is free from wind, light, fall;  
Shuns water, feels not weight, is strong, hid, firm.

He, too, props the whole spiritual building, "On this Rock I will build My Church;" and that with *rocks*, the unpolished stones of doctrine, like the altars of unhewn stones under the Law, for the Apostle tells us, "My speech and my teaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom." The wind of vain-glory comes not near Him, for He "shall be as a hiding-place from the wind," and saith of Himself, "I receive not honour from men." He needs not light, for though we see through a glass darkly, He ever hath open vision, "dwelling in the light which no man can approach to." He knows no fall, for His humility has searched the lowest depths, as it is written, "I am a worm, and no man, a very scorn of men, and the outcast of the people." He shunneth the waters of pleasure or riches, and saith of Himself, "My throat is dry." He feels not weight, in that He counts toil on our behalf as nothing, for "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." He is strong, for He is God; yea, as holy Job saith, "If I speak of strength, lo, He is strong." He is hidden, "Verily, Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the SAVIOUR." He is firm, "for He shall never be moved."

*The Lord loveth the gates of Sion.* These gates are twofold, the Apostles and other preachers of the word, by whose agency men enter into the Church, and the Sacraments which the converts receive in order to their full entrance into heavenly citizenship. God loves them *more than all the dwellings of Jacob*, because the Gospel Saints and Sacraments are higher than those of the Law, the Gospel Church nobler than the tabernacles of Moses and David, than the temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel. So it is written on the one hand, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he;" and on the other, that the Law hath only "a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things." There are, observes one commentator, four principal gates to the Holy City;



Baptism, to enter in ; Penance, to return by ; Orders, to ascend by ; and Extreme Unction, whereat we go out ; while the twelve articles of the Creed are at once, like the Apostles, foundations and gates, each a single pearl of great price ; fairer and more blessed than those tents of Jacob which Balaam, wondering, saw and blessed.

Rev. xxi. 21. Again, the verse may be applied to the Blessed Virgin, herself sprung from the holy and lofty race of Hebrew saints, prophets, and kings, and loved by God more than all other virgin souls, dwelling in the *tabernacles* of pure bodies which wrestle, as *Jacob*, against all sin.

L. There is a curious Rabbinical belief that in the days of Messiah, Mount Sion will be exalted by the heaping up of Sinai, Tabor, and Carmel, as a base beneath it, while restored Jerusalem crowns the height. And this they take as the sense of that prophecy : " The mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills."

Isa. li. 2.

2 Very excellent things are spoken of thee : thou city of God.

How *excellent*, how *glorious*, (A.V., LXX., and Vulg.) does not appear till we reach the glowing language of the Apocalypse, and that of the many Christian hymns on the joys of the Heavenly City which have drawn their inspiration thence, for in this Psalm the Church Militant and Triumphant are so blended in idea into one, that it is impossible to sever them, or contemplate them independently of each other. " O blessed land of Paradise," exclaims one whose eyes have for centuries gazed on those delights for which they once longed, " O blessed land of gladness, for which I sigh in this valley of weeping ; where wisdom without ignorance, memory without oblivion, understanding without error, reason without obscurity, will shine ! Blessed are they who dwell there, and who will praise God for ever and ever. Amen." So, too, are very excellent things spoken of her, the mystical city of God, wherein the Great King deigned to tarry. There are many reasons for giving her this title, which may be thus summed up :

S. Bernard.

S. Proclus.

Hugo Card.

Rex, præsul, populus, defensio, templa, domus, lex,  
Fons, schola, ludus, opes, commercia, pax, cibus, arma.

King, pontiff, people, guard, shrine, home, and law,  
Fount, school, sport, riches, trade, peace, weapons, food,

S. Germanus  
Constantinop.

all which are interpreted either of the sojourning of the LORD within her, or of the graces which made her a fitting abode for Him. Note, moreover, that every holy soul is, in its degree, a city of God, placed high on the holy mountains of contem-



plation, founded on the Rock which is CHRIST, and having the gates of mind and body ever ready to open to the LORD when He knocketh, but barred closely against His foes. Of such a one shall glorious things be spoken, even, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy LORD;" and again, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the City of My God, which is New Jerusalem."<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the Church is called in this Psalm by six titles: S. Bonaventura. foundation, mountain, Sion, holy, gates, city; the first because of her firmness, the second by reason of her exaltation, the third because of her looking for her GOD, the fourth from her graces, the fifth to denote her security, and yet her readiness to admit, and the last epithet tells us of the gathering together of the multitude within her.

3 I will think upon Rahab and Babylon: with them that know me.

This rendering does not express the meaning of the original, nor is the A.V., though in part more correct, accurate either. The whole verse should run, *I will record Rahab and Babylon amongst those that know Me*, that is, amongst My worshippers. *Rahab*, "pride," (S. Hieron.) or "the haughty one," means Egypt, which is so styled by Isaiah, "Art not Thou it that hath cut Rahab?" Accordingly, we have a prophecy of the same seer, to the like effect: "And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day." How gloriously this promise was fulfilled, the long list of the great Saints of the Church of Alexandria and of the Thebaid may tell us for Egypt, while the roll of the martyrs under the fierce persecution of Sapor, who ruled where the King of Babylon once had sway, is not less eloquent for Mesopotamia. But nearly all the old commentators suppose that Rahab the harlot of Jericho is here named,<sup>2</sup> and frame their glosses accordingly. Seeing, rightly enough, that the calling of the Gentiles is here foretold, they point out how Rahab was a type of all converted sinners, bearing on their foreheads the red line traced with CHRIST'S

Bellarmine.

Isa. li. 9.

Isa. xix. 21.

A.

<sup>1</sup> In this sense of CHRIST claiming the Church, or the faithful soul, as His Bride, there is a special force in the Hebrew  $\text{רָחַב}$ , which is the Pual form, found only in one other place, Cant. viii. 8, where, as with the Piel of 1 Sam. xxv. 39, it means "to ask a woman in marriage."

<sup>2</sup> The words are not quite

alike in Hebrew. That found here is  $\text{רָחַב}$ , (LXX.,  $\text{Ραβ}$ ) "proud," from a root meaning "to be angry or insolent." The harlot's name is  $\text{רָחַב}$ , (LXX.,  $\text{Ραχὰβ}$ ), "spacious," from another root meaning "to be wide." The commentators have mixed up these meanings as well as the names themselves.



- precious Blood, thronging amidst the publicans and harlots into the kingdom of heaven, while Scribes and Pharisees remained without, still in that fated Jericho, whence our true Joshua delivers them that trust in Him. Rahab, too, meaning "spaciousness," is a type of those that once walked along the broad way of destruction, but, receiving and hearkening to the Apostles, messengers of the Conqueror, entered on the narrow way, and shall be saved when the world sinks in ruin at the sound of the Archangel's trumpet. And *Babylon*, the city of "confusion," is named too, because from it there is a steady tide of emigration, of sinners justified by grace, and drawn into the fellowship of Jerusalem. *With them that know Me*. There are two readings of the Latin here, both differing from this. One, the Vulgate, and more usually received, is, Of Rahab and Babylon, *that know Me* (*scientium Me*.) That is, as some explain it, God treats the future as present, and speaks of those whose conversion He foresees, as already knowing Him. But most of them take the words as meaning the same as the other reading, that of LXX. and Gallican Psalter, *to them that know Me*, (*scientibus Me*.) that is, I will put the desire of preaching to Rahab and Babylon into the hearts of My Apostles and missionaries, that they may bring them to the knowledge of Me.
- S. Bruno  
Carth.  
Honorius.
- A.
- B.
- Ric. Hamp.
- Haymo.  
Hugo Card.

4 Behold ye the Philistines also : and they of Tyre, with the Morians ; lo, there was he born.

- C. The LXX. and Vulgate rendering, as usual, *strangers* or *aliens* for Philistines (*ἀλλόφυλοι*, *alienigenæ*) give the key to the interpretations here, which see in the widest expression the Gentiles, "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," while *Tyre* denotes, as they will have it, those in the "strait" of penitential sorrow (it rather denotes those hard and stony with worldly prosperity,) and the *Morians* or Ethiopians, such as are black with sin, and long in spiritual darkness. *There was he born*. The LXX. and Vulgate read severally *These were from there*, and *These were there*. That is, they were admitted by the new birth of regeneration into that city, whose deadliest foes they had been. Ayguan, observing that the Hebrew reads the clause in the singular, takes "this" to mean each of the specified nations taken singly. Others, seeing that it applies to one person, have applied it to a single Ethiopian, the eunuch of Queen Candace, but a truer sense is that the citizens of the new Jerusalem above are not ennobled as nations or communities, but each one separately, in the cleansing waters of Baptism. There is yet another meaning, that most obviously suggested by the Prayer Book Version, to which the Chaldee paraphrase lends weight. It reads, *Where that king was born*, or, as another rendering takes it, *anointed*, Because of the fame of Solomon, strangers from
- Eph. ii. 12.
- Ay.
- S. Athanasius.
- Targum.  
Genebrardus.



distant countries crowded to Jerusalem to see him, or at least the place of his abode; because of a greater than Solomon, the Gentiles throng into the Church to kneel at His footstool.

5 And of Sion it shall be reported that he was born in her : and the most High shall stablish her.

This version harmonizes so exactly with the last cited meaning of the previous clause, that it is hard to forego it; but although it nearly agrees with some of the Latin comments, it does not give the sense of the passage, which is rightly translated by the A. V., *This man and that was born there*, which is, save for the first clause, not dissimilar to the LXX., *Mother Sion will say, Man and man was born in her.*<sup>1</sup> That is, the population of Sion will become vast from the natural increase of the alien immigrants, yet so that each new citizen is separately recognized, separately ennobled, admitted by a separate act, that the individual shall never be lost sight of in the mass. S. Augustine, following the LXX. rendering, but pointing it differently, takes it thus: *A Man will say, Mother Sion, and a Man was made in her.* And he explains it of CHRIST, Himself the Most High Who founded Sion, choosing her for His earthly Mother, and condescending to be born within her, words which another aptly takes of the Virgin Mother. But Euthymius, admitting this same text, interprets the words of every Gentile convert who will recognize Sion as his true Mother, because she has lovingly fed him with the nourishment of holy doctrine. Yet again, they turn it very ingeniously thus: *The Mother of Sion*, that is, the Synagogue, *will say, A man*, meaning thereby that CHRIST is only a mere human being. But *Sion* will say, He is *Most Highest*. The Vulgate reads, *Shall Sion say, A man, and a man was born in her, and the Most High founded her.* And it is explained to be a cry of wonder on the Psalmist's part, as though he were saying, I know that glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God, but is it possible that thou canst ever declare that the Man has been born in thee, that the Highest has deigned to become Incarnate? Or, as others, with but little difference of meaning, take it; *Will any man say to Sion*, can any merely human understanding assert or comprehend the mystery of the Man's birth Who is the Most High? There is yet a third exposition, which alleges that one particular man is meant here as the herald of the SAVIOUR'S birth, and he, of course, John Baptist, the Forerunner, the "man sent from God," who did tell these good tidings to Zion.

A.

Philip de la Grève.

Z.

Honorius.

Haymo.

R.

S. Albertus Magnus.

Lyrannus.

Ay. S. John i. 6.

Isa. xl. 9, marg.

<sup>1</sup> Μητρὶ Σιών ἐπεὶ ἄνθρωπος  
καὶ ἄνθρωπος ἐγενήθη ἐν αὐτῇ.  
This seems to have arisen from

a misreading of μὴ τῇ Σιών.  
Aquila and Symmachus agree  
with A.V.



6 The LORD shall rehearse it when he writeth up the people : that he was born there.

- That is, the LORD, when registering the nations in the Book of Life, will alone be able to compute the innumerable myriads of His redeemed, and shall say of every alien who has sought Jerusalem and submitted to her laws, *This man was born there*; meaning thereby that the acquired citizenship of the Gentiles is as perfect and indisputable as that of the descendants of Abraham, inheriting by right of birth. And that precisely because it is by means of the new birth in Holy Baptism that the franchise is conferred. Of this Isaiah spake in prophecy, saying, "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem." But the Vulgate and LXX. read *The Lord shall narrate in the Scriptures of the people and of the rulers that were [LXX. born] in her.* This, as a Greek commentator urges, has reference to the use made of the Old Testament by CHRIST Himself, to prove His mission and authority. For S. Luke tells us how "there was delivered unto Him the book of the Prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor." This sort of Scripture of the Prophets He calls the Scripture of the peoples, or of the princes, because they were given to the nations and rulers of the Jews, and were thus the peculiar possession of them that were born in Zion. The Latins, on the other hand, will have it that the Scriptures of the *peoples* here mean the New Testament, intended for the unlearned and simple, not merely for scholars and philosophers, but which are, nevertheless, the Scriptures of the *princes* too, of the Apostles, Evangelists, and great Doctors of the Church, for these are they of whom it is written, "The princes of the people are joined unto the people of the God of Abraham." Another lays stress on the phrase *peoples*, as the technical term opposed to that of the one nation of the Jews, and argues that the Gentile Scriptures are thereby denoted in contrast to the Jewish ones, not, as above, to the secular writings of philosophy. But a still more ingenious exposition is that which finds here a prophecy of the hallowing of the Gentile languages by their becoming channels for the narrative of CHRIST's life on earth, whereas they had previously contained only idolatrous blasphemies. Lastly, some have seen here a reference to that census of the Roman empire taken by order of Augustus at the time of the Redeemer's birth, wherein He caused Himself to be enrolled among the princes of the people, as the lineal descendant of David's royal house. And Tertullian informs us that this record was in his day still preserved in the archives at Rome, and could
- Genebrardus.
- Galatinus.  
R. Josep.
- Isa. iv. 3.
- Z.
- S. Luke iv. 17.
- C.  
Haymo.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.
- Ay.  
D. C.
- Ps. xlvii. 9.
- Galatinus.
- Genebrardus.
- Agellius.  
Salmeron.
- Tertullian.  
c. Marcion.  
iv.



be appealed to in disproof of those who cast doubts on the fact of CHRIST's nativity.

7 The singers also and trumpeters shall he rehearse : All my fresh springs shall be in thee.

The true force of this verse is found by comparing the versions of Aquila and Symmachus, who, coinciding with S. Jerome, give us this result : *The singers, as in dances, will say in praise, All my springs are in thee.* That is, for the Church Militant, that the singers and dancers of the world shall dedicate their once abused powers to the worship of God, and that gladly. The fountains then will be the sources of divine song, nay, the songs and hymns themselves, into which they will break forth, according that saying of the Prophet, "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation ; and in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon His Name, sing unto the LORD." Their songs are streams of rejoicing, all derived from that one primal fount that issued from the side of JESUS. Agellius. Isa. xli. 3—5.

Oujus de gurgite vivo  
Omnis posteritas latices in carmina duxit  
Annemque in tenues ausa est deducere rivos,  
Unius fecunda bonis.

Manilius,  
Astron.

From whose living flood,  
All later time, enriched by one alone,  
Bore from its waters chalices of song,  
And boldly drew its stream in slender rills.

And the blessed ones, rejoicing in the gladness of the heavenly Jerusalem, shall, drinking of its pleasures as out of a river, fix all their happiness there, and regard it as the source and well-head of felicity. Another permissible rendering is not without a beauty of its own ; *All my springs in thee shall sing like those that lead the dance ;* for whereas many of God's *springs* in the Church below are waters of affliction and of penitential tears, in our Country above there will be no streams save those of perennial joy. Bellarmine. Cocceius. Genebrardus.

A living stream, as crystal clear,  
Welling from out the throne  
Of God and of the Lamb on high,  
The LORD to man hath shown.  
This stream doth water Paradise,  
It makes the Angels sing ;  
One precious drop within the heart,  
Is of all joy the spring,  
Joy past all speech, of glory full,  
But stored where none may know,  
As manna hid in dewy heaven,  
As pearls in ocean low.

John Mason,  
1663,  
altered in  
H. A. M.



Yet again, it may be, *the singers and dancers, yea, all the springs of gladness*, all expressions of joy, *are in thee alone*. But the LXX. and Vulgate, following a different reading of the Hebrew text, which affects the previous verse also, translate, *As of all rejoicing ones the dwelling is in thee*.

- A. What does this *As* mean? asks S. Augustine. It tells us that our earthly joys are only a faint image of those delights which as yet we know not, and that the words our ignorance forces us to employ are quite inadequate to describe the gladness of heaven. The *dwelling*, too, is there, not the mere tabernacles of Jacob, shifting and uncertain in their place, but eternally unshaken, on the lofty hills of the Golden City. And, lastly, they take the verse of the Blessed Virgin, as the holy place within which abode our true Isaac, our mystic "laughter," and in whom therefore the joy of the whole earth was for a time contained.

Therefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, the Most High Founder of Sion; glory be to the SON, the Man Who was born in her; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, from Whom flow all the fresh streams which water the Paradise of God.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

Ludolph. O God, the foundation of our faith, Who settest up the gates of eternity with the strong wall of righteousness in holy minds as upon lofty mountains; grant that we may believe gloriously in Thee, and confess by preaching that Thou wast made Man for our redemption. Who livest.

Ludolph. O God, the founder of all good things, grant us to become fit to attain fellowship in light everlasting with all them that rejoice in Thee. Through. (1.)

D. C. Quicken us, O LORD, from dead works, and lay in us the foundations of faith unfeigned and of active goodness, that our souls may build thereupon the fruit of virtues, and journeying to Thee, may be received with welcome by Thy glorious city. Through. (1.)

### PSALM LXXXVIII.

TITLE. A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the Chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite. Or, A Song or Psalm of the sons of Korah, to the Chief Musician, for the flute (?) as a choir-song [or, as a lament, cf. 2 Sam. vii. 10,] an Instruction of Heman the Ezrahite.

LXX. and Vulgate: A Song of a Psalm for the sons of Korah,



to the end, for *Maheleth* responsively, of understanding of *Eman the Ezrahite*.

S. Jerome: A Song of a hymn of the sons of Korah, to the Conqueror, by the chorus for singing, of instruction of *Eman the Ezrahite*.

#### ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, who vouchsafed to die for us, may be glorified by early Resurrection. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER touching the Passion, or of His sons to Him. The Prophet, touching the death of CHRIST and His Resurrection.

VEN. BEDE. *Maheleth* is interpreted a choir singing Divine words; and that which is added, *responsively*, denotes that the musical instruments came first, and that the choir responded solemnly: mystically implying that the Church should harmoniously imitate the LORD's Passion, which is sung of in the Psalm. For *Eman the Israelite* which is interpreted *His brother*, and the man that seeth God, denotes the same faithful people, whereof is said, "Go, tell My brethren." *Eman*, moreover, is the son of Joel, the son of Shemuel, of the family of Kohath, son of Levi, one of the singers whom David set over the others for the singing when he brought up the Ark. Jerome hath explained this title thus: This Psalm refers to faith, and the whole choir responds in unison to the sons of Korah who present, and it is composed by the understanding and prudence of *Eman the Israelite or Ezrahite*. Arnobius, in this wise: In the title of this Psalm certain sons of Korah are named; but the Psalm directs its song for *Amalech*, and ascribes understanding to *Eman the Israelite*. The Hebrews call *Amalech* the "destitute," and *Eman* the "poor."<sup>1</sup> Therefore the discourse is addressed to the destitute and poor, I believe, Him whom the disciples forsook alone and fled: Who, when He was rich, became poor for us.

Throughout the Psalm the LORD speaketh. In the first part He maketh petition for help; describing by various similes the contempt which He was to suffer at the hands of the Jews. *O Lord God of My salvation, &c.* In the second part He counts up what He was to suffer, declaring that the dead cannot be raised up by physicians so as to give thanks to GOD. *Thou hast put away Mine acquaintance far from Me.* Thirdly, He saith that the buried cannot proclaim the mercy of GOD, nor the land sound His praises, and therefore He prayeth that His Resurrection may come very swiftly. Persevering in this prayer, He speaketh on behalf of His members, mentioning the various sufferings which as well He as His devout people hath endured, *Shall Thy lovingkindness be shown in the grave?*

<sup>1</sup> These etyma are erroneous. But a similar result may be obtained from the correct ones, *מַחֲלֵלִת*, *Mahalath*, the true reading here, comes from the root *חָלַל*, to "pierce" or "perforate;" *יִמָּן*, *Heman*, means "faithful,"

from *יָמַן*, "to be true," while *Ezrahite* is from *עָזַר*, *Ezra*, whose root is *עָזַר*, "to help," and the singer appears as the Faithful and True Whom they pierced, the SON of GOD, our Helper.



EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA. He prophesieth the death of CHRIST.  
S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of address, and prayer, and supplication.

## VARIOUS USES.

<i>Gregorian.</i> Friday: Matins.	{	[Good Friday: III. Nocturn.
<i>Monastic.</i> Thursday: Lauds.		Easter Eve: III. Nocturn. Seven Dolours B.V.M.: III. Nocturn. Dedication of Church: II. Nocturn.] <sup>1</sup>
<i>Parisian.</i> Saturday: Prime.		[Easter Eve: III. Nocturn.]
<i>Lyons.</i> Saturday: Prime.		[Good Friday: III. Nocturn. Easter Eve: III. Nocturn.]
<i>Ambrosian.</i> Wednesday of Second Week: II. Nocturn.		[Easter Eve: Matins.]
<i>Quignon.</i> Saturday: Terce.		

## ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* As preceding Psalm. [Good Friday: Thou hast put away Mine acquaintance far away from Me,\* I was delivered up, and I came not forth. Easter Eve, and Seven Dolours: I have been even as a man that hath no strength, free among the dead. Dedication: Jacob set up a stone for a pillar,\* and poured oil upon the top of it.]

*Monastic.* Let my prayer enter \* into Thy presence, O LORD. [Good Friday, &c., as *Gregorian.*]

*Mozarabic.* Unto Thee have I cried, O LORD,\* and early shall my prayer come before Thee.

This Psalm stands alone in all the Psalter for the unrelieved gloom, the hopeless sorrow of its tone. Even the very saddest of the others, and the Lamentations themselves, admit some variation of key, some strains of hopefulness; here only all is darkness to the close. Hence it is clear that only some most overwhelming disaster, national or personal, could have given birth to it, and this fact sets aside at once any such literal acceptance of the title as would refer the Psalm to that Heman the Kohathite whom David set along with Asaph in the first place of the Temple-singers. Nor is there any internal evidence for a date which shall be more than conjectural. But it seems most reasonable to take it, with the Hebrew and early Christian commentators, as written during the first shock of the Captivity, and before the exiles had in any degree formed a polity or established a worship among themselves to preserve their national existence amidst their heathen masters.

1 O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee: O let my prayer enter into thy presence, incline thine ear unto my calling.

Z. It is the cry of the SON of GOD in the bitterest hour of His Passion. As Man, He calls on His FATHER as His LORD and  
B. God; as the God, further, of His salvation, of His perfect

<sup>1</sup> The *Monastic*, by a very peculiar use, employs this Psalm at the Matins of Easter Day also.



pureness of body and soul, and reminds Him of the persevering prayers offered up with strong crying and tears throughout His life, and especially in the *day* of His Crucifixion and the *night* of His Agony in the garden. And as He speaks on behalf of His people Israel, He uses epithets suited to God's care for them: He calls Him LORD, as King and Ruler; God, as Creator; *of salvation*, because of the deliverance out of Egypt, the greater deliverance which He desires for them from the Babylonian captivity of sin. *O let my prayer enter into Thy presence.* Here we may see the mighty force of earnest prayer, in that its utterances are not dissipated in the winds, but it *enters*, like a living person, into the actual presence of GOD, and discharges there that office for us which the body cannot do, since it is unable to penetrate thither. As, then, a good messenger is swift, and goes at once by the straightest road to his goal, that he appear not robbed and naked before him to whom he bears a missive; as he must have a thorough understanding of the message, so as to deal fitly with him to whom its execution belongs, and with all those who have influence with that person; as he should not ask what should not be asked, nor be foolish in his asking, nor yet apply to any one who has no power to do the thing wanted; as he should know who are his opponents, and should have some method of resisting or conciliating them; as he should not contradict himself, nor speak with wandering thoughts or averted face, and should utter what he says with a distinct and clear voice; even such should be the qualities of a prayer which is to enter into God's presence, and find acceptance with Him. Here, then, the Christian may see how, following the Master's example, he may prevail with the Most High. He must pray devoutly, acknowledging Him to Whom he prays as LORD and GOD; he must pray wisely, asking for *salvation*; he must pray personally for himself, asking for *my* salvation; he must do it perseveringly, *day and night*, in prosperity and adversity alike; he must do it fervently, *before* GOD; he must do it with such purity of intention that the prayer may *enter into the presence* of GOD, whither nothing defiled can make its way; he must do it with such trustfulness, that GOD, the Great Physician, may *bow down His ear* to the sick man who cries to Him from the death-bed of sin.

Lyranus.

C.

L.  
Guil. Paris.

Hugo Card.

Lyranus.

D. C.

2 For my soul is full of trouble: and my life draweth nigh unto hell.

The soul of CHRIST was *full of trouble*, though there was no fault in Him, because He bore not only the betrayal, the reproaches, the stripes, the cross, and all other details of personal suffering, but still more, the sins and sorrows of all mankind, especially of those very Jews who had conspired against Him, so that His life drew *nigh unto hell*, as the

A.

Ay.



L. death which they had plotted came hourly nearer. Herein we may see the reality of CHRIST's Passion, as against those early sectaries who maintained that He merely seemed in outward show to suffer, but that His Divine impassibility extended to His human nature; whereas He saith Himself, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." And He declares Himself to be *nigh unto hell*, not merely nigh unto death, because Hades, not Paradise, was the dwelling of the departed Patriarchs till He, by entering their prison, released them. His members may take these words as their own, when their soul is full of trouble, not only by reason of the sorrows of this world, but when they think on their own sins, and fear the wrath to come, knowing that by reason of those sins, their life draweth nigh unto hell. But by descending thither in thought and in devout meditation while living, we may be wise in time, and escape from it when dead.

S. Matt.  
xxvi. 39.

Agellius.

Hugo Card.

3 I am counted as one of them that go down into the pit : and I have been even as a man that hath no strength.

Genebrardus.

A.

S. Hieron.  
in Esa.

Haymo.

Z.

S. Matt.  
xxvi. 53.

S. Matt.  
xxvii. 43.

D. C.

S. Luke xxi.  
17.

That is, literally, I am so near death, that I am counted as already dead, so that men are even now making ready for my burial, although I be alive. And applied to CHRIST, the words denote not only the set purpose of His enemies to slay Him, but their belief that He would thenceforth vanish, like all other dead men, and be without help or power to return, or to nerve His disciples to further resistance; nay, that He would even undergo punishment in the place of torment, because by His blasphemies He had on earth gone down amongst sinners into the pit and depth of iniquity. He was counted as without help in another sense, because all His disciples forsook Him and fled, for His enemies knew not of that which He said to Peter, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray unto My FATHER, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of Angels." They counted Him as without that FATHER's help, when they said, "He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him." And as with the King of Martyrs, so with His soldiers. The tyrants who slew them, thought to destroy them and their faith by so doing, and counted them amongst the worst of malefactors, according to their LORD's own saying, "Ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake." And finally, it may be taken of any tempted one over whom the spiritual enemy is confident of victory, counting him as already dead in trespasses and sin, and with no help for him in his God.

4 Free among the dead, like unto them that are wounded, and lie in the grave : who are out of remembrance and are cut away from thy hand.



*Free among the dead.* The LORD was *free* from corruption, and free, too, in that He was not led by Angels, but went down Himself alone into the grave. He was free too from sin, the cause, near or remote, of death to all other men. He was free, because while others die unwillingly, and on compulsion, He died of His own accord and willingly. "I," saith He, "lay down My life. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself." He was free, yet again, because He was not bound by the fetters of death, but descended thither with authority and dignity, and burst the chains of others. He was free, because inseparably united unto the Manhood which descended was the Godhead which is not subject unto death. But though this is the higher sense of the phrase as applied to CHRIST by His servants, it is plain that it cannot be the meaning as intended by His enemies. The word *חַיִּים* is found also in 2 Kings xv. 5, applied to the leper's house to which King Uzziah was confined, and it is there translated "several," that is "isolated."

*Free among the dead*, then, means turned adrift, homeless, free from the organic bonds of life and of society, *loosed* and therefore *lost*; nay, as He hung upon the Cross, free for every one to insult and wound at pleasure, being out of the pale and fence of the law's protection. In both senses the words hold good of the members as well as of the Head. That man is *free among the dead*, who walks in newness of life in a wicked world, amidst those who are dead in their sins; *free*, because he is subject to Him Whose service is perfect freedom, because he has "not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but the Spirit of adoption," because he is "no more a servant, but a son;" and yet the ungodly think him free among the dead, as cut off from all the pleasures of life, and turned adrift from all social ties and amenities into a hard and mortified existence, which is but a living death; the view commonly taken of the Religious Life by those who know not its enjoyments. *Like unto them that are wounded, and lie in the grave.* That is, not merely cut off by a sudden and violent death, but executed by the officers of justice in punishment for crime, because "He was wounded for our transgressions and numbered with the transgressors," and most literally wounded with nails and spear; and like too to those wounded by the darts of the enemy, by the smittings of sin, who lie, persisting in wickedness, in the grave of dead works, and are not alive to God. Once again, the words hold good in a favourable sense of those whom the wicked hate; for they, wounded with the love of God, *sleep* (Vulg. and LXX.), in that they close their eyes to vanities and evil desires, and are *buried*, because they withdraw into retirement, and hide their works from the praise of men. *Who are out of remembrance*, or rather, with A.V., LXX., and Vulg., *whom Thou rememberest no more.* As God cannot

Z.

A.

S. John x.  
18.

Origen.

Thrupp.

Cocceus.

Hugo Card.

D. C.

Rom. viii.  
15.

Gal. iv. 7.

Hugo Card.

Cajetan.

Isa. liii. 5,  
12.

A.

S. Brune  
Carth.

B.

Philip de la  
Grève.  
Serm. 185.



- A. forget, most of the commentators agree with S. Augustine's reading, *whom Thou hast not yet remembered*; that is, those who must wait till the general resurrection before rising again, instead of doing so on the third day. Some, however, take it as expressing those sinners whom God delivers over to their own evil will, never chastising them, but as it were forgetting their offences and their very existence. *And are cut away from Thy hand.* That is, who no longer need God's providential care, as having lost those bodies which He provided with food, shelter, and clothing, and other visible proofs of His care and governance, which do not appear in the case of the dead; or again, that the thread of their life has been as it were cut off from the hand of God, and thus separated from the web of life. This figure of speech is not peculiar to the Pagan fable of the *Parcæ*, for Hezekiah exclaims, "I have cut off, like a weaver, my life." But in their special reference to CHRIST, the words obviously point to the Jewish belief in His rejection by God as a sinner, whereas, instead of being *cut off* from Him, the heavenly voice had declared Him to be the beloved SON, in Whom the FATHER was well pleased. It was to those who slew Him that the words in this sense apply, for God no more remembers the obstinately impenitent, but cuts them off from His hand, even from fellowship and part in His Only-Begotten.
- R. Honorus.
- Agellius.
- L.
- Isa. xxxviii. 12.
- Haymo.
- R.

5 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit : in a place of darkness, and in the deep.

- Origen. Bellarmine. S. Chrysost. Z. P. Pseudo-Hieron. A. Hugo Card. Bellarmine. Ay.
- This verse does not refer to the entombment of CHRIST, as some would take it, for the grave has already been named in the preceding clause, and though it may well be called a *place of darkness*, yet it is not the *lowest pit*. That may better be explained of the descent into Hades, although there is no reason to reject absolutely the various steps of that descent which they enumerate; the bitter sorrow and misery, the prison along with the thieves, the Cross itself; the abyss of sin which the Jews in their false accusations charged Him with plunging into, all made part of the descent into that depth, all made yet rougher His sharp passage to the grave. And this interpretation squares well with the LXX. and Vulgate versions, which read, *They have put me, &c.* But there is a truer beauty in the Hebrew text, which tells us that all the Passion was the act of God the FATHER, Who spared not His own SON, but delivered Him up for us. For *in the deep* they read *In the shadow of death*. And they teach that this phrase has a threefold sense; oblivion, sin, and bodily death. The Jews strove to put our LORD into the shadow of death in these three ways: first, by attempting to destroy His teaching and very memory; next by coupling Him with malefactors, and loading Him with false accusations; lastly, by the Crucifixion itself. Yet for Him, as S.



Gregory observes, it was but the *shadow* of death, the bare suffering of the body, and that suffering did away for ever with the reality of death, the spiritual destruction of the soul, for all who believe in Him. And God permits His servants to be similarly tried in their degree, when He puts them into the midst of sore trouble, of darkness and doubt, and above all, of false accusation, to test their endurance. The literal sense found here by some early commentators is by no means improbable, that it has special reference to the Captivity, and perhaps to the blinding and imprisonment of the unhappy Zedekiah, the last king of the line of David.

S. Greg.  
Mor. IV. 29.

Hugo Card.

Targum.

S. Basil. M.

Theodoret.

Lyranus.

Jer. xxxix. 7.

6 Thine indignation lieth hard upon me : and thou hast vexed me with all thy storms.

And that because CHRIST bore in His own person the sins of the whole world, which are under the just indignation of Almighty God ; as it is written by the Prophet, "The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." And while this metaphor of a solid crushing weight is employed when speaking of God's share in bringing about the Passion ; on the other hand, the raging winds and waves are used as the type of human passion and the ill-will of evil spirits loosed against the Most Holy ; yet called *Thy* storms, because even so they were but the ministers accomplishing the Divine will. The quaint mediæval legend of S. Christopher brings this double idea of the verse very forcibly before the mind. After narrating how the Child's voice summoned the giant to carry him over the river, the story continues : "Christopher, therefore, lifting the Child on his shoulders, and taking his staff, entered the river to cross it. And, lo, the water of the river began to swell little by little, and the Child weighed most heavily, as it were of lead ; and the further he proceeded, the waves waxed the higher, and the Child pressed more and more on the shoulders of Christopher with weight unbearable, so that Christopher was in a sore strait, and dreaded that he was in peril. But when he had now just come forth and had crossed the river, he set down the Child on the bank, and said unto Him : 'Child, Thou hast set me in sore peril, and didst weigh so grievously that if I had the whole world upon me, I could scarce have felt it heavier.' And the Child answered him : 'Marvel not, Christopher, for thou hast had upon thee not the whole world only, but thou hast borne upon thy shoulders Him Who created it, for I am CHRIST thy King.'" And thus we have the trials of the Church and of every faithful soul set before us in the double type. The hard pressure from above stamps on the patient believer, who has melted like wax in the fire of God's tenderness, the Image of the Only-begotten, sealed with the HOLY SPIRIT of promise, the waves below wash away the defiling stains of sin, and turn the brief sorrow into everlasting joy.

D. C.

Isa. III. 6.

Agellius.

Jac. de  
Voragine.  
Legend.  
Aur.

D. C.



7 Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me : and made me to be abhorred of them.

- L. They dwell on the various fulfilments of this saying, reminding us of the rejection of the LORD by the whole Jewish nation, His kinsmen according to the flesh ; of the flight of His disciples, when they all forsook Him ; of the suffering at the place of Crucifixion itself, when His bitterest enemies crowded round Him to accomplish their evil deed, and to jeer Him, whereas " all His acquaintance, and the women that followed Him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things." *And made Me to be abhorred of them*, as even His chief Apostle denied Him with curses ; as the Name of CHRIST is still loathed and blasphemed by His unhappy and blinded kinsmen. How exactly the same trial was accomplished in His members we may read again and again in the story of His early martyrs, abandoned, denounced, slaughtered, by their own near relatives and acquaintance, and abhorred as guilty of the vilest secret crimes. Cardinal Hugo applies the verse to those who, abandoning the world, sought the religious life at the call of God, but against the will of their secular friends. And observe, that the whole verse, as well as that which follows, aptly depicts the position of a leper, cut off from human companionship, an object of disgust and reviling, and thus a fit type of Him Who was despised and rejected of men. The leper was not merely an exile, but a prisoner, unfettered indeed to the eye, but limited to a narrow boundary, to pass which was forbidden under severe penalties, amounting, in later ages, sometimes to death. It follows, therefore :
- R. Bellarmine.
- Z. Hugo Card.
- S. Luke xxiii. 49.
- Agellius.

8 I am so fast in prison : that I cannot get forth.

- S. Basil M. In the literal sense, they explain it either of an actual  
Theodoret. dungeon, such as that into which Zedekiah was thrust, and then of calamities hedging a man round like walls from which there is no escape ; or again, of such shame and confusion as to prevent the sufferer from daring to show his face in public. Interpreting the place of CHRIST, they say, and rightly, that the sufferings of the Passion, laid on Him by the eternal desire of the FATHER, and by His own free will, formed that narrow prison whence His tender love to man would not permit Him to come forth till He had borne all to the very uttermost. And S. Gregory the Great, commenting on the kindred passage in Job, " I kept silence, and went not out of the door," observes, " He kept silence and went not out of the door, Who just before the hour of His Passion, when He was suffering the weaknesses of humanity, would not exercise the power of Deity. And when He was despised, because He seemed mere man, He could have gone forth, had He willed to disclose His hidden majesty, but as He showed His
- Titelman.
- Bellarmino.
- L.
- Job xxxi. 34.  
Moral. xxii. 17.



weakness, and concealed His power, He went not out to His persecutors, in that He remained unknown to them." The LXX. and Vulgate read, however, in the first clause, *I was delivered up*, or, as it may be turned, *betrayed*, whence many of the commentators explain the words to refer to Judas Iscariot, and to the Jews who delivered the LORD up to Pilate. They also give other interpretations of the closing words, *I came not forth*: namely, that He made no attempt to escape out of the garden from the soldiers, nor to avoid His FATHER'S will, nor yet to show the actual power of the CHRIST, nor, once more, to hasten His own Resurrection, but abode in the grave long enough to leave no doubt as to the fact of His death. The Carmelite gives a somewhat forced explanation of the phrase, taking it of the concealment and silence which CHRIST observed as to the name of the traitor, until such time as he had accomplished his guilt, giving him full room for repentance, and shielding him from the indignation of the other Apostles. They give another meaning of the whole passage when spoken of the faithful soul, which GOD has been pleased to call to affliction in this world. In the prison of repentance for all, in the prison of the religious life for a few, there is no coming forth, at least here. So it is written, "None of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning;" and again, "Whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be on his head." All the night of this life must, then, be spent in constant repentance for past sins, until the morning breaks of the everlasting day.

C.

Honorius.

D. C.

Pseudo-Hieron.  
Cajetan.

Ay.

Hugo Card.

Exod. xii. 22.

Josh. ii. 19.

9 My sight faileth for very trouble : LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched forth my hands unto thee.

The first clause seems literally to mean the soreness and dimness of sight caused by excessive weeping, and is so taken by many of the commentators, and Lorinus aptly quotes a Latin poet in illustration—

L.

Mœsta neque assiduo tabescere lumina fletu  
Cessarent.

Catullus,  
lxviii. 55.

Nor my sad eyes to pine with constant tears  
Could cease.

The Carthusian adds, however, other reasons, such as the blindfolding of the LORD'S Face, the buffets He received, the spitting on His countenance, the droppings of blood from the crown of thorns, as all working to the same end, and still more when to all was added the agony of the Cross. The LXX. and Vulgate reading, *Mine eyes languish because of poverty*, has led to a mystical interpretation, for, as S. Augustine observes, it cannot be taken literally of CHRIST'S bodily eyes, since His betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion took place in quick succession immediately after the Paschal

A.

D. C.



S. Matt. v.  
14.

A.

Theodoret.  
Cajetanus.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
Hugo Card.  
D. C.  
S. Cyprian.  
Isa. lxx. 2.  
Rom. x. 21.

Supper, so that famine had no opportunity of wasting His physical faculties, and the metaphorical sense is excluded also, because the inner eyes of His mind were filled with unwaning light. Wherefore it is necessary to find a different meaning from these two, and to apply the words mystically to His Body the Church, whose *eyes* are the Apostles, His seers, and the "light of the world," made faint and weak in the time of the Passion by the withdrawal of the true Light, the Bread of heaven, from them. But *I have called daily* [or, *all day*] *upon Thee*, in the seven voices from the Cross, and in the prayer for Resurrection, and because the perpetual intercession of CHRIST ascends for His people, even when the Church becomes weak in faith and slack in prayer. *I have stretched forth My hands unto Thee*, is said in that CHRIST ceased not to perform His acts of power and mercy, symbolized by the *hands*, throughout His earthly ministry, in that He continued fervent in prayer, in that He spread out His loving-kindness to embrace man as though with His arms, and finally, in that His sacred hands were literally strained upon the bitter Cross, stretched out all the day long, through the weary hours of that sad Good Friday, to a disobedient and gainsaying people.

10 Dost thou show wonders among the dead : or shall the dead rise up again, and praise thee?

11 Shall thy loving-kindness be showed in the grave : or thy faithfulness in destruction ?

12 Shall thy wondrous works be known in the dark : and thy righteousness in the land where all things are forgotten ?

L.

Exod. xxxii.  
11, 12.

Z.

Theodoret.  
Cajetanus.

A.

Bellarmino.

The object of this passionate cry is not so much the private advantage of the petitioner, as the vindication of God's might, glory, and goodness, that He may so disclose them by His dealing with the suppliant, as to draw others to His worship ; and thus it resembles the prayer of Moses on behalf of the rebellious Israelites, lest their destruction should further harden the Egyptians in their unbelief. And therefore the verses are most fitly applied to Him of Whom the great Jewish lawgiver was but a type and forerunner, and depict Him as expressing the fear of death entertained by His human nature, and also the necessity of His Resurrection, foreseen by His divine nature to be required, in order that the Apostles might have power to work miracles and preach His Name amidst the deadness and darkness of heathenism. For the most part, the expositors pass very lightly over the literal interpretation of these three verses, and prefer to follow S. Augustine in taking them allegorically of those who lie in the grave of sin, and asking what may be God's purpose towards them, whether He have provided any means of reaching and



delivering them. In the tenth verse, the second clause in LXX. and Vulgate runs, *Shall the physician raise [thee] up?* which is mystically explained to be a reference to the Apostles and other holy preachers, physicians of the soul, sent to proclaim the Gospel to sinners. S. Jerome reads in this clause, *Shall the giants arise?*<sup>1</sup> said by S. Augustine to imply that no skill or might of physicians, however gigantic, is enough; and by others, that the words refer to the antediluvian giants or any other, and thus they are explained of peculiarly grievous and obstinate sinners, respecting whose capability of repentance the question is asked. They remind us, too, that the *loving-kindness* and *faithfulness* of GOD are only titles of the LORD JESUS, and that He did make His way into the very heart of the grave and of destruction, to show His wondrous work of salvation *in the dark* of Hades; though there are some found to suggest that the *grave* here means the "open sepulchre" of the tongue of the Pharisees and Chief Priests, and *the land where all things are forgotten*, not merely the abode of the finally lost, but that ungrateful Judæa which kept not in mind either the testimonies of the Prophets or the marvellous works of the Redeemer Himself, when it cried aloud for His crucifixion. And, spoken of one sinful soul, it is true that a man of earthly mind, who pays no regard to spiritual things, is himself a *land*, a mere piece of earth, where all things divine are forgotten, and where even GOD Himself can do no mighty works, because of its unbelief.

C.

A.  
Agellius.

B.

Ay.

Homorius.

L.

13 Unto thee have I cried, O LORD : and early shall my prayer come before thee.

This is the third time in the Psalm that the suppliant declares that he has cried to the LORD, doing so first, day and night; next, all the day; and now, early; and, as is usual in such triple repetitions, there is a peculiar stress to be looked for here. This is alleged by several very early commentators to be the petition of CHRIST, at the early beginning of the Passion, for His Resurrection, so that they who saw Him stretching out His hands all day long upon the Cross, may now behold Him in the morning glory of His arising, according to that universal tradition of the Church that He rose immediately after midnight. But many of the Latins, having regard to the words that follow, urge that though CHRIST is the speaker, yet He is speaking in the person and on behalf of His Church, crying to the FATHER, Who alone is a physician strong enough to deliver the dead, for salvation *in the morning* of the Gospel revelation which followed the clouds and darkness of idolatry; that when the blazing noon-

Le Blanc.

S. Athanasius,  
S. Cyril.  
Hieros.  
Arnobius.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.

A.

<sup>1</sup> These various renderings depend on the pointing and interpretation of the word עָרַב.



1 Cor. iv. 5. tide of the Judgment comes, when the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light, and the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, a noontide compared with which even the morning itself is as night, His suppliants may find grace with Him. In the *morning* of this life, the *morning* promise of good works, Christians must make their prayer to God. We are reminded, too, how often in Holy Writ the early morning is the time when God bestowed some great favour on His people; how then the Egyptians were drowned, the Law was given, the manna rained down, the Ammonites vanquished by Saul, and how even in the lower creation, the birds begin their song of praise, and the wild beasts flee to their coverts. We have then the literal sense that the first-fruits of the day should be hallowed to the service of God, for it is a shame, observes S. Augustine, that the sun's rays should find a Christian slothful in his bed. And so one of our own poets:

Henry  
Vaughan,  
*Rules and  
Lessons.*

When first thine eyes unveil, give thy soul leave  
To do the like; our bodies but forerun  
The spirit's duty. True hearts spread and heave  
Unto their God, as flowers do to the sun.  
Give Him thy first thoughts then, so shalt thou keep  
Him company all day, and in Him sleep.

Yet never sleep the sun up. Prayer should  
Dawn with the day. There are set, awful hours  
Twixt heaven and us. The manna was not good  
After sun-rising; far-day sullies flowers.  
Rise to prevent the sun; sleep doth sins glut,  
And heaven's gate opens when this world's is shut.

*Come before Thee.* The LXX., Vulgate, and A. V., *prevent*, that is, anticipate. Yet how? for as S. Bernard observes, God may be sought, and may be found, but He cannot be prevented, and a prayer which He has not Himself inspired must needs be cold and poor. We cannot prevent His grace or His blessings, but we may prevent His judgments and His rewards, by making our prayer in this life, by confessing our sins before He chastises, by giving Him praise and honour before He bestows gifts, nay, even when He sends chastisements.

14 LORD, why abhorrest thou my soul: and hidest thou thy face from me?

Cocceius.

Here we may find the foretaste of that supreme hour on the Cross, when it seemed to the human nature of CHRIST as though that soul which He was making an offering for sin was rejected by the FATHER, and not received as an oblation of a sweet-smelling savour; nay, that God, instead of showing His Face in benign acceptance of the Sacrifice, hid Himself, and forced out the lamentable cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

S. Matt.  
xxvii. 46.



But the LXX. and Vulgate read, *Why rejectest Thou My prayer?* and this is explained of that petition, "O My FATHER, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." They raise, in order to answer, the question of how the FATHER can be said to reject the prayer of the SON, seeing that CHRIST Himself saith, "I know that Thou hearest Me always." And they reply that it is spoken of delay on God's part, not of denial; and also that CHRIST's absolute prayer, that for the redemption of mankind, was heard, but the cry of His lower will, for escape from death, was not. Spoken of His members, many reasons are assigned for God's delay in granting prayers. It is to make them more ardent, like the breeze which seeming to extinguish a flame, only fans it. It is sometimes because the thing we ignorantly ask for is dangerous, and God purposes to give us something better. It is often for our fault, in various ways. Either the prayer is too late, like that of the foolish virgins; or false, like that of those who content themselves with crying, "LORD, LORD," but do not the will of their FATHER in heaven; or that of obstinate sinners, of whom is written, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination;" or cruel, like the desire of James and John to bring down fire on the guilty village: or lacking in perseverance, as when Abraham ceased to petition for Sodom; or because it lacks the wings of almsgiving and fasting, for "prayer is good with fasting, and alms, and righteousness;" or because it is made for an undeserving person, for the LORD saith, "Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me, for I will not hear thee," or because it is idle, for "Surely GOD will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it." But we may well bear in mind the loving-kindness rather than the judgments of GOD in this hiding of His face, and remember how He delayed that Incarnation for which the Fathers of the Old Covenant looked so yearningly, and lengthened out the pangs of the Martyrs of the New Covenant in order to increase their reward.

S. Bruno  
Carth.  
S. Matt.  
xxvi. 39.

B.

Le Blanc.

C.  
S. Greg.  
Mag.

Hugo Card.

Prov. xxviii.

9.

Tobit xii. 8.

Jer. vii. 16.

Job xxxv.  
13.

Ay.

C.

15 I am in misery, and like unto him that is at the point to die: even from my youth up thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind.

The words, *from my youth up*, belong to the first clause, as the A. V., not to the second, as here. Lest we should fancy that the Passion of CHRIST was but of three hours, or of a single day, the HOLY GHOST reveals to us here that CHRIST never lived without suffering in the days of His flesh. For besides the cup of His most bitter death, which He had ever before His mind's eye, He was throughout His life in toils and troubles. I, saith He, *am poor and in labours from My youth*, (LXX. Vulg.) for though I was blessed and rich in

Bellarmino.

Z.



the form of God, I became needy for the sake of you men, and that from Mine infancy, as the manger, and the cave of Bethlehem, and the flight into Egypt testify. Wherefore the sorrows of His nativity are fitly commemorated in the great Passiontide hymn of the Western Church as the beginning of His woes in the glorious battle against sin.

S. Venant.  
Fortunat.  
The Hymn,  
*Pange  
Nagua.*

Laid an Infant in the manger,  
In the stable poor and dim,  
Wrapped in swaddling-clothes enfolding  
Every helpless infant limb,  
Thus the Blessed Virgin Mother,  
Mother's care bestowed on Him.

- Lam. iii. 27. Whence we too may take pattern not to put off austerity and self-denial till mature age, remembering that the Prophet hath said, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." The words fitly betoken also the sufferings of the Church from Abel under the Old Covenant and Stephen under the New, through all the trials, vicissitudes, and struggles against her enemies, ghostly and bodily. As her LORD was poor, in that He had no place to lay His head, so she is poor also, in hunger and thirst, here in exile, for the good things of her country, and her Saints are poor in voluntary poverty and in their humble estate in this world.<sup>1</sup> *Thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind.* And this we may most fitly take first of the Agony in the garden, when the LORD said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." But the LXX. and Vulgate, following a different sense of the text here, read, *Being exalted, I was humbled, and troubled.* He was *exalted* by His FATHER in miraculous power, *humbled* in human weakness and mortality, *exalted* on the Cross, as on the throne of His kingdom, having over His head a title written, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," He was *humbled* even unto death, and *troubled* because of the blindness of His people, and their coming ruin. He was exalted by the people when they cried aloud, "Blessed is the King Who cometh in the Name of the LORD," and humbled before His judges, doomed to the scourge and the Cross. It may not only be taken of the vicissitudes of the Church, which has always had to undergo troubles and persecutions after any great spiritual victory, but it may well be applied to the history of the workings of grace in each soul, which is *exalted* in pride while puffed up with earthly thoughts, then *humbled* to confession by the sense of sin, and *troubled* or confounded at the thought of judgment to come.
- A.
- S. Matt. xxvi. 38.  
Diodorus.  
S. Athanasius.  
Bellarmine.
- S. Luke xix. 38.
- L.
- C.

<sup>1</sup> The nephews and kindred of Popes and Cardinals cannot caustically remarks Cardinal Hugo, for they are rich, and get benefices from their cradles.



16 Thy wrathful displeasure goeth over me : and the fear of thee hath undone me.

17 They came round about me daily like water : and compassed me together on every side.

Because the wrath of God against the countless and varied sins of all mankind passed over them on to the head of CHRIST, Who was smitten for the transgressions of His people, He was exalted on the Cross, and humbled unto death. The *terrors* (A. V., LXX., Vulg.) of God, whether in the form of the anticipation of the Passion during the Agony, or the permitted attacks of evil spirits, or the plots of the chief priests and angry cries of the multitude, encompassed the LORD; and that *like water*, not merely because it drowns, but because it searches every crevice, goes to the very bottom, and makes its way on all sides once it can obtain any entrance, thus fitly denoting the penetrating force of temptation and trouble. They remind us, too, that the words aptly tell us of the awe which the terrible thought of judgment to come brings upon the souls of even righteous men; but take comfort from the phrase *goeth over*, (διήλθον, *transierunt*) as implying that God's chastisements do not abide permanently upon His people, but pass away from and over them when their work is accomplished. The curses and terrors of the Law encompassed in like manner the Jews of old, and it was only the same SAVIOUR Who can deliver us from the judgment that could free them from its sore bondage.

Eusebius.  
Bellarmine.

L.  
B.

Hugo Card.

Cd.

C.  
Agellius.  
Eusebius.

18 My lovers and friends hast thou put away from me : and hid mine acquaintance out of my sight.

Herein, so far as our LORD was Man, was the crown of His sorrows, that He had to drink His bitter cup alone, with no fellow and partner to share His grief. *Lover and friend*, (A. V., Vulg.) God *put from* Him when Judas became a traitor and an enemy, and when His nearest *acquaintance*, the Apostles themselves, forsook Him and fled, so that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled to the letter: "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with Me." *Out of my sight*. The LXX. and Vulgate read *from misery*, that is, that the reason why His acquaintance fled was to avoid sharing in the troubles which He endured. But the true rendering is *My acquaintance are darkness*. This may be taken, literally, as equivalent to the Prayer Book version, implying that they had concealed themselves, so as to be unseen; or again, as referring to the darkness on Calvary, the only thing which, while it lasted, met the dying eyes of JESUS; or yet again, that the only friend left, the only intimate who would hold to Him, was—the grave; as His martyrs and confessors have found many a time in the midst of a hostile and blaspheming world.

Bellarmino.

Isa. lxi. 3.

De Wette.

Job xvii. 13,  
14.



Wherefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD GOD of our salvation; glory be to the SON, Who was free among the dead, and showed His loving-kindness in the grave; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Whose wondrous works are known in enlightening the dark hearts of sinners.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

Ludolph.

O GOD, Redeemer of all, and ineffable Giver of our salvation, Who passing into hell for us, wast free among the dead, hear the morning prayer of Thy servants, and deliver us from the grievous bondage of the crafty foe. Who livest.

Mozarabic.  
Passiontide.

O LORD JESU CHRIST, Who foreknowing him that should deliver Thee unto death, didst foretell it before Thy death, and dying didst go down thither where is the appointed house of all living, to wit, into hell; Grant us that when the time of our summons shall arrive, we may not go down thither to be held in punishment, whither Thou camest dying to be a deliverer through pardon, but stretching out Thine hand, save us by Thy manifest power from the depth of hell, Who alone didst vouchsafe to lay down Thy life for sinners. (11.)

Mozarabic.

O GOOD CHRIST, consider our need and poverty, lest Thou shouldst hide Thy face from us and cast off our soul, that we who are poor and afflicted from our youth up, may at length be refreshed with heavenly delights, and rejoice in being clothed with everlasting immortality. (11.)

Mozarabic.

Come quickly, O CHRIST, to Thy Church, to comfort her, poor and in troubles, that Thou, Who becamest poor and needy for her sake, mayest reward her with heavenly gifts in the world to come. (11.)

Mozarabic.  
Passiontide.

O CHRIST, SON of GOD the FATHER, Who bearest the vision of the Cross, when Thine acquaintance, the disciples, stood afar off in Thy Passion, suffer not Thyself, we pray Thee, to go far from us, but make known unto us the paths of Thy sweetness, and as Thou didst not come forth when Thou wast delivered up, in that Thou didst not disclose Thyself as God to the inner sight of men, grant us a true knowledge of Thy Godhead, that after our passage hence we may enjoy Thee in that substance, Who with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST abidest One in Unity and in glory everlasting. (11.)

D. C.

O LORD GOD of our salvation, graciously have mercy upon us, and by the abundance of Thy propitiation call back our soul, which is full of troubles, and our life which, through sin, draweth nigh unto hell; put us far from all sorrow now and for evermore, that through Thy bountiful mercy, we may evermore pay Thee our debt of praise. (1.)



We humbly beseech Thee, O CHRIST, to strengthen with Thy might Thy servants delivered by Thy Passion from the snare of hell, and vouchsafe to loose them from the toils of the second death, that disburdened and free, we may be united unto Thy kingdom. Pseudo-Hieron.

## PSALM LXXXIX.

**TITLE.** Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite. Chaldee Targum : A good understanding, spoken at the hand of Abraham, who came from the East. LXX. and Vulg. : Understanding of Ethan the Israelite (LXX.) or Ezrahite (Vulg.)

## ARGUMENT.

**ARG. THOMAS.** That CHRIST rules in equal power with the FATHER and the Comforter. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER touching the Jews. The Voice of the Prophet, touching CHRIST, to the FATHER, or the Voice of the SON or of the Church to the FATHER touching the Jews. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER. The story is sung of the time when the people were numbered.

**VEN. BEDE.** *Ethan* is interpreted the *Strong*, and as this Psalm is about to tell of the praises and promises of the LORD, the unchangeable firmness of its faithful words is indicated by the name *Strong*. And here *Understanding* is necessarily prefixed, no doubt because an everlasting throne is promised to David, which meanwhile we can see was destroyed long ago historically. This *Ethan*, like Heman, was either one of the singers of David the king, whom the Words of Days mention, to wit, the son of Kishi, the son of Abdi, of the family of Merari, son of Levi : or one of those wise men to whom the wisdom of Solomon is preferred in the Book of Kings, "Wiser," it saith, "than Ethan the Ezrahite and Heman." This song is of such wisdom that it deserves to be ascribed to the name of that very wise man. This *Ethan* the *Strong*, who was filled with such mental enlightenment that he is most truly styled an *Israelite*, at the first outset of the Psalm declares that he will sing of the mercies of the LORD, because He hath promised many things that will profit the faithful people. *My song shall be always of the lovingkindness of the Lord.* In the second part he describes in various ways the praises and power of the LORD. *O Lord, the very heavens shall praise Thy wondrous works.* Thirdly, he counts up the promises of the FATHER to CHRIST, *Thou spakest sometime in vision unto Thy saints.* In the fourth place, the LORD Himself declares, by reason of the Passion which He endured, that He was delivered up to His enemies. *But Thou hast abhorred.* Fifthly, he prays for help for human weakness, because God hath not made the children of men for nought : *Lord, how long wilt Thou hide Thyself, for ever ?* Sixthly, he asks the LORD to fulfil His promises, which He declares that He made to David His servant, and



to remember what reproaches His servants bore from the ungodly.  
*Lord, where are Thy old lovingkindnesses ?*

**SYRIAC PSALTER.** Concerning the people which was in Babylon.  
**EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA.** He teacheth the Kingdom of CHRIST  
 from the seed of David.

**S. ATHANASIUS.** A Psalm of narration.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian.* Friday : Matins. [Christmas Day : III. Nocturn.  
 Transfiguration : III. Nocturn.]

*Monastic.* Friday : Matins. [Christmas Day : II. Nocturn.  
 Transfiguration : II. Nocturn.]

*Ambrosian.* Wednesday of Second Week : III. Nocturn. [Christmas  
 Day : II. Nocturn. Epiphany (ver. 27 to end :) I. Nocturn.]

*Parisian.* Thursday : Matins.

*Lyons.* Friday : Matins. [Christmas Day : III. Nocturn.]

*Quignon.* Thursday : Matins.

#### ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* Praised\* be the LORD for evermore.  
 [Christmas Day : He shall call Me. Alleluia. Thou art My FATHER.  
 Alleluia. Transfiguration : Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice  
 in Thy Name,\* Thou hast a mighty arm.]

*Ambrosian.* Thy truth shalt Thou stablish in the heavens.  
 [Christmas Day : I will make Him My firstborn\* higher than the  
 kings of the earth. Epiphany : I will set His hand in the sea,\*  
 and his right hand in the floods.]

*Parisian.* O LORD,\* they shall walk in the light of Thy countenance,  
 their delight shall be daily in Thy Name : and in Thy righteousness  
 shall they make their boast.

*Lyons.* As *Gregorian.* [Christmas Day : First section : Righteousness  
 and equity, Alleluia,\* are the habitation of Thy seat, Alleluia.  
 Second section : He shall call Me, Alleluia,\* Thou art My FATHER,  
 Alleluia. Third section : His seat is like as the sun before Me,  
 Alleluia,\* and as the moon perfect for ever, Alleluia.]

*Mozarabic.* Thy truth shalt Thou stablish in the heavens, O LORD.

1 My song shall be alway of the loving-kindness of the LORD : with my mouth will I ever be showing thy truth from one generation to another.

This noble Psalm, contrasting forcibly in much of its hopefulness with its sad predecessor, nevertheless implies distinctly the visitation of the House of David with severe chastisement, and the author is clearly the King of Judah himself, or some one speaking in his name, and putting words into his mouth. It has thus been conjectured, not without much plausibility, that it refers to the captivity of Manasseh, or, more probably still, from the mixture of thanksgiving and hope, to the release of King Jehoiachin from his prison, after a captivity of seven and thirty years, and his restoration



to royal precedence and honours at the court of Evil-Merodach, King of Babylon. 2 Kings xxv. 27.

The opening of the Psalm, observes the Carthusian, is truly most sweet, and far, far pleasanter than any worldly, carnal, or idle pleasure. He does not say the *mercy* of the LORD, but His *mercies* (Heb., LXX., Vulg., A.V.,) for according to the multitude of our miseries the mercies of the LORD are multiplied upon us. And that sevenfold; first, in that He guards us from sinning, as it is written, "I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall;" secondly, that He awaits the penitence of the sinner, "Thou winkest at the sins of men, because they should amend;" thirdly, He calls after waiting, because "God is patient with them," and then "poureth forth His mercy upon them;" fourthly, because He is so swift and tender in welcoming the penitent, for "He hath mercy upon them that receive discipline;" fifthly, that He corrects us for our sins, and amends our lives, "Thou, because Thou art gracious, have mercy upon us, or punish our iniquities with Thy scourge;" sixthly, comes the bestowal of grace for the attainment of everlasting life, for, "He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them;" and seventhly, He inspires us with hope of obtaining eternal blessedness whereof the Psalm itself speaks.

The Psalmist saith, *I will sing* (Vulg., A.V.,) whence we may gather the joy that is in his heart. They who seek the LORD here in the Church Militant, and they who have found and hold Him fast in the Church Triumphant, alike raise in His honour the song of Holy, Holy, Holy. *Always*, or as it is in LXX. and Vulg., *for ever*. Bellarmine, following several of the earlier commentators, attaches these words to *mercies*, not to *sing*, for the somewhat jejune reason that the Psalmist, as a mortal, must cease his singing, but that the LORD's mercies are for ever. But there is no question as to the collocation of the words in the Hebrew, nor will the succeeding clause allow us to explain *always* as only to the end of the singer's earthly life. We may rather take it, on the one hand, as a prophecy of the continual use of this Psalm in the public worship of GOD, *from one generation to another*, from the generation of the Jews to that of the Gentiles, throughout the long ages that have elapsed since its notes were first heard, so that the Psalmist, "being dead, yet speaketh;" while, on the other hand, it may denote the hope of joining, after death has silenced the voice here for a time, in the unceasing melodies of heaven; where the generation of man joins in fellowship with the generation of angels.

D. C.

S. Bernard.  
Serm. de  
panibus.  
Hosea ii. 6.  
Wisd. xi. 23.

Ecclus.  
xviii. 11, 14.

Judith vii.  
20, Vulg.;  
om. LXX.  
and A.V.  
Isa. xlix. 10.

Hugo Card.

Bellarmine.

C.

When this poor lisping, stammering tongue  
Lies silent in the grave,  
Then, in a nobler, sweeter song  
I'll sing Thy power to save.

Cowper.



S. Greg. M.  
Mor. iv. 42.

Isa. lxxv. 16,  
17.

S. Bernard.  
Cluniac.  
Rhythm.

Hugo Card.

S. Athanasius.

L.

Trevetus.

A.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

D. C.

S. Gregory the Great raises the question here as to how a perpetual singing of the *mercies* of God is compatible with unalloyed bliss in heaven, inasmuch as the thought of mercy connotes the memory of sin and sorrow, which needed mercy, whereas Isaiah saith that "the former troubles are forgotten," and "the former things shall not be remembered, nor come upon the heart." And he replies that it will be like the memory of past sickness in time of health, without stain, without grief, and serving only to heighten the felicity of the redeemed, by the contrast with the past, and to increase their love and gratitude towards God. And so sings the Cluniac:

Their breasts are filled with gladness,  
Their mouths are tuned to praise,  
What time, now safe for ever,  
On former sins they gaze:  
The fouler was the error,  
The sadder was the fall,  
The ampler are the praises  
Of Him who pardoned all.

Note, too, that he says, with *my* mouth, not with that of any deputy; *I will be showing*, not secretly or timidly, not in a whisper, but boldly preach, *Thy truth*, not my own opinion, far less my own falsehood, but Thy Truth, which is Thine Only-begotten Son.

2 For I have said, Mercy shall be set up for ever:  
thy truth wilt thou stablish in the heavens.

The LXX. and Vulgate read, *For Thou hast said*. There is no practical difference, for the *I* is here God Himself, Whose words are given directly by the Psalmist just as in lxxxi. 6, and Job xlii. 1—5. It is God's answer to the first verse, as though He were saying, The reason, O man, why thou promisest to show forth My praise for ever, is because I, for My part, have said that the mercy, which I will stablish, shall be for ever. And if we read the clause in the second person, then the Prophet declares himself to be merely God's instrument, and that he will show forth what God has spoken and dictated to him. I will be showing forth, I speak for this reason, observes the Doctor of Grace, because Thou hast spoken first; I, a man, may safely say what Thou, O God, hast said, for even should I waver in mine own word, I shall be established by Thine. *Mercy shall be set up for ever*. More exactly, with A.V., and the early renderings, *built up*. For not only will this mercy of God be strong and unshaken by any earthly vicissitudes or any counsel of man, but the Incarnation and Passion of CHRIST, in the act of redeeming mankind, will repair the wastes and build up anew the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem with living stones, so as to make good the breaches caused by the fall of the rebel Angels; a



view of this verse common to some Rabbinical authorities. *For ever*, not merely because God's mercy proceeds from an everlasting decree, and because its effects have no end, but because throughout all time it is poured out upon fresh objects, and daily swells the ranks of penitents and saints. There are not wanting some to remind us that this mercy so eternally built up is none other than the LORD JESUS Himself, Whose Sacred Body was compacted of the holy flesh of Mary, whereof is written, "Wisdom hath builded her house." *Thy truth shalt Thou stablish in the heavens.* Whether these words be those of the Psalmist to GOD, or of GOD the FATHER to His SON, we may draw the same lesson from them, that He Who is very Truth had His throne set up above the heavens at the Ascension, and that He hath established His Word and Gospel in the mouths of His holy Apostles, of whom is written, "The heavens declare the glory of GOD." For *stablished* the Vulgate reads *prepared*, whence they draw the lesson that GOD makes ready the foundations of His mercy by first destroying those of sin, and builds up His temple on the very site of an idol shrine. So He enjoined His Prophet "to throw down, and build."

Midrash  
Tehillim.  
Galatinus.

S. Hieron.  
adv. Pelag.

Z.

Prov. ix. 1.

Honorius.

L.

A.

Ps. xix. 1.

Jer. i. 10.

3 I have made a covenant with my chosen : I have sworn unto David my servant ;

4 Thy seed will I stablish for ever : and set up thy throne from one generation to another.

S. Augustine, leaving the literal sense here as too obvious to need discussion, turns at once to the mystical meaning. What *covenant* is this that GOD has made, save the New Covenant or *Testament*, which brings us into our new heritage, which we welcome with the new song ? And they point out further that the double promise here cannot possibly be interpreted literally. There is, on the one hand, a promise of an unbroken line of descendants, and on the other, the maintenance of the royal dignity in that line. It is, to say the very least, supremely improbable that any lineal descendants of the House of David now survive, after the measures taken by Domitian and Trajan to root them out for political reasons, and the long break in the genealogical records ; it is certain that the last Davidic prince who exercised even a titular sovereignty over the chosen people was Zerubbabel, as the power after his death lay between the Persian satraps of Syria and the High Priests. And we are therefore compelled here, as in Psalm lxxii., to seek for a deeper meaning, a more glorious promise than the temporal prosperity of a single race. Most truly then shall we see here not merely the everlasting Kingdom of CHRIST, but the aspect of that Kingdom upon earth, the great company of the faithful who are the spiritual seed of Abraham, who, united to their kingly

A.

L.

Eusebius,  
Hist. Eccl.  
iii. 26.

A.



- Head, as members of the body, are kings in and through Him, palaces wherein His throne as LORD and Master is set up even in the generation of our mortal life, and much more in that other generation of resurrection and immortality. It is to be noted that the word *chosen*, though singular in the Hebrew text, is translated as plural by LXX. and Vulgate, and may thus be referred literally to the whole Jewish nation, or to David and his sons, while mystically these *elect* will denote the whole company of the redeemed, and especially the Apostles and Doctors of the Church. A Greek Father points out very well how the final settlement of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy City under David, after its prolonged wanderings from one place to another, forms an apt type of the firmness and universality of the Catholic Church set up by CHRIST in the terms of this promise of the FATHER.
- Bellarmino. And we may take the whole promise as referring to each righteous soul, which is like David, the friend and beloved of God, which is strong in the battle of good works against sin, and comely in aspect by reason of inward holiness, and for which an everlasting crown is laid up in heaven.
- Diodorus.
- Hugo Card.

5 O LORD, the very heavens shall praise thy wondrous works : and thy truth in the congregation of the saints.

- Bellarmino. We here on earth, tied and bound with the chains of our sin, feeble through our mortal frailty, cannot praise Thee aright ; but the glorious skies with their bright constellations, lifted far above us, the shining hosts of the Angels, will do what we cannot. And we may bear in mind how often the heavens bore their witness to CHRIST, how a new Star announced His birth, how the Angels sang carols over His cradle, how the heavens were opened above Him at His Baptism, when the Voice of the FATHER was heard ; how the sun was darkened as He hung upon the Cross, how an Angel sate upon the empty sepulchre to declare the glad tidings of His Resurrection. There are no works of God more wondrous than the Incarnation of His SON, and His marvellous conversion of sinners by His grace, making the heavens to praise Him ; and so those especial heavens, the holy Apostles and other great preachers of the Gospel, pour down the refreshing rains of doctrine on the thirsty and eager soil of the *Church of the Saints*, which alone lies so beneath those clouds as to drink in their showers freely. Such preachers are likened to the heavens, because they are raised high above the earth, are starry with virtues, shining with the lights of grace, honoured by the indwelling of God, and compassed with the circle of perfection.
- Ay.
- A.  
S. Albertus Magnus.
- Hugo Card.

6 For who is he among the clouds : that shall be compared unto the LORD ?



7 And what is he among the gods : that shall be like unto the LORD ?

Here the Psalmist gives the reason why the heavens will take up the song of praise which is too great a theme for human lips. They will not refuse the office, for they are themselves, however high above men, unspeakably below the throne of God, are His servants and ministers, not His equals, nor even like to Him. And though He Who is the LORD became man, and took upon Him the form of a servant, yet even in His utter humiliation, in His lowest estate, no Angel might be compared to Him in majesty, in wisdom, or in love. Observe that whereas the heavens were named in the fifth verse, we have the *clouds* in the sixth. And what the mystical force of this term is, we may learn from the Prophet, when speaking of the judgments on the vineyard of God he says, "I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it." And as the "vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel," we understand by this threat the turning of the Apostles to the Gentiles, after their message had been rejected by the Jews. The Apostles were clouds in their human weakness, in their passiveness, as they were heaven in the mightiness of truth; but they were also clouds in that they were charged with that Gospel whereof God spake by Moses: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass." They are clouds, too, because their holiness is veiled by their flesh, as a cloud, so that we cannot see that which lies within. We see what comes from the cloud, but not what happens in the cloud, so we receive the rain of Divine teaching from the Apostles, but cannot observe the process of Divine revelation within them. So runs the hymn for Apostles in the Paris Breviary:

Like clouds are they borne  
To do Thy great will,  
And swift as the winds  
About the world go;  
All full of Thy Godhead  
While earth lieth still,  
They thunder, they lighten,  
The waters o'erflow.

Santol. Victorin. The Hymn, Supreme, qualities, Arbitrator.

Yet, with all their gifts and graces, there is none of them, none of any of those eminent for holiness, those *gods*, or *sons of God* (LXX., Vulg.) that can be compared to the LORD JESUS; for He is SON of GOD by eternal generation, and naturally; they are sons of GOD only by adoption and grace.

Eusebius.

Ay.

8 God is very greatly to be feared in the council



of the saints : and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him.

- Hugo Card. In the literal sense, the *council of the Saints* may most probably denote the Jewish nation, which from its small numbers, and from being alone possessed of the secret oracles of God, is fitly styled His council, while *those that are round about* are the Gentile nations encompassing the Hebrews on every side. Or, if the reference be to the heavenly service, the words depict for us that scene of the Apocalypse: "And all the Angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God." They raise the question as to how the Angels can be said to be *round about* God, seeing that He is infinite and omnipresent, filling all the universe.
- C. Or, if the reference be to the heavenly service, the words depict for us that scene of the Apocalypse: "And all the Angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God." They raise the question as to how the Angels can be said to be *round about* God, seeing that He is infinite and omnipresent, filling all the universe.
- Rev. vii. 11. the words depict for us that scene of the Apocalypse: "And all the Angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God." They raise the question as to how the Angels can be said to be *round about* God, seeing that He is infinite and omnipresent, filling all the universe.
- Bellarmino. Cardinal Bellarmine answers that it is because God gives Himself to the view of His Angels, in such wise that they all behold Him simultaneously, as though they did in fact encircle Him; but the great Bishop of Hippo reminds us that He, when made man, was in truth circumscribed by a body and local boundaries, to be born, to dwell, to be crucified, buried, and to rise again within the limits of one narrow territory, and yet to be so preached by His Apostles as to be had in reverence of all those nations which lay round about it.
- A. Cardinal Bellarmine answers that it is because God gives Himself to the view of His Angels, in such wise that they all behold Him simultaneously, as though they did in fact encircle Him; but the great Bishop of Hippo reminds us that He, when made man, was in truth circumscribed by a body and local boundaries, to be born, to dwell, to be crucified, buried, and to rise again within the limits of one narrow territory, and yet to be so preached by His Apostles as to be had in reverence of all those nations which lay round about it.
- Bellarmino. The word *council* is, they say, emphatic, as denoting in the case of the Angels, not that they give advice to God, for as Isaiah and S. Paul alike ask, "Who hath been His counsellor?" but that He reveals His measures to them, and sends them as messengers to execute them; while the phrase, as applied to the Saints on earth, denotes the reason, thoughtfulness, and deliberate nature of their service and devotion.
- Isa. xl. 13. And whereas he that has a retinue *round about him*, must have some before, some behind, some on his right hand, some on his left; so the LORD JESUS is followed behind by those who attempt to imitate His actions by the pursuit of holiness, they are on His left hand who turn secular learning and natural philosophy to spiritual purposes and the vindication of religion; they are on the right who busy themselves in pure meditation on divine things only; while those who have been made perfect in love of God's beauty, are suffered to have full enjoyment of the Beatific Vision, and see Him face to face.
- Rom. xi. 34. but that He reveals His measures to them, and sends them as messengers to execute them; while the phrase, as applied to the Saints on earth, denotes the reason, thoughtfulness, and deliberate nature of their service and devotion.
- S. Bruno Carth. And whereas he that has a retinue *round about him*, must have some before, some behind, some on his right hand, some on his left; so the LORD JESUS is followed behind by those who attempt to imitate His actions by the pursuit of holiness, they are on His left hand who turn secular learning and natural philosophy to spiritual purposes and the vindication of religion; they are on the right who busy themselves in pure meditation on divine things only; while those who have been made perfect in love of God's beauty, are suffered to have full enjoyment of the Beatific Vision, and see Him face to face.
- S. Maximus. Z.

9 O LORD GOD of hosts, who is like unto thee : thy truth, most mighty LORD, is on every side.

- Bellarmino. The Psalmist has been hitherto directing his words to human listeners, but fired with love and wonder at the thought of God's marvels, he suddenly breaks into an apostrophe to Him. *Who is like unto Thee?* he exclaims, for there is no
- D. C.



ratio between the finite and the infinite, and though His truth and power are already exerted and manifested in His works of nature and of grace, yet His mightiness is not exhausted thereby, for "hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of Isa. xl. 28. the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding?" And thus His *truth is on every side*, because He is the centre of all creation, and His divine power and truth pour their rays on all His works, that we may behold them and worship Him, for, as the Wise Man saith, "by the greatness and beauty of the creatures Wisd. xiii. 5. proportionably the Maker of them is seen." His truth is round about Him also, because He has it perfectly and of Himself as His attribute, and does not derive it from any other source. It clothes Him as a garment, for "righteous- Isa. xi. 5. ness is the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins," for as the girdle binds the garments closely round the body, so the truth of CHRIST binds the words of His promises, so that they cannot be changed, but must be fulfilled, and that too with speed and readiness, as a man who Bellarmino. is girt up is able to run swiftly. These promises of CHRIST are round about Him, in that Church of which He is the centre, as it is the creation of grace whose midmost part He Honorius. is. On *every side*, too, because this Church is spread all S. Albertus. over the earth, and even in it He is specially confessed by His Saints, the chosen guard closest about their Monarch, Magnus. as the tents of the great encampment of Israel once compassed the Tabernacle round about. And note that when the truth of the LORD, the Gospel of the Kingdom, at first hidden in the central shrine of Judæa, began to be made known amidst the Gentiles round about, then the rage of the powers of evil and of this world broke out in fierce storms of persecution; wherefore is added:

10 Thou rulest the raging of the sea : thou stillest the waves thereof when they arise.

11 Thou hast subdued Egypt, and destroyed it : thou hast scattered thine enemies abroad with thy mighty arm.

Here the literal sense recalls the passage of the Red Sea, Agellius. and its reflux upon the horsemen and chariots of Pharaoh. Honorius. The word here rendered *Egypt* is *Rahab*, the "proud one," of whom we read in Psalm lxxxvii. 3, and it is so translated by LXX. and Vulgate, which agree in reading *Thou hast humbled the haughty as wounded*, which closely agrees with a similar apostrophe in Isaiah, "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art not Thou it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art Thou not it which Bellarmino. Isa. li. 9.



- hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?" And S. Augustine, preaching on the festival of certain Martyrs, observes that when the Gentiles came to the knowledge of the Truth, the enemy rushed upon them like a raging lion, but was overcome by the LORD, who rent him as Samson did his type. "What," he asks, "did the sea effect by its raging, save to bring about the holy day which we are keeping? It slew the Martyrs, it sowed the seed of blood, and the crops of the Church shot up abundantly." That *mighty Arm of God*, the Only-Begotten Son, Who wounded the proud one, as Jael did Sisera, with the nail which fastened Himself to the Cross, *scattered His enemies*, the Jewish nation which rejected Him, *abroad* in the terrible captivity and dispersion that followed on the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. He, by humbling Himself, hath wounded and humbled the pride of man, and made him lowly, so that we, wounded in turn by love of Him, are scattered abroad, and parted from our native errors and sins, as well as from the fellowship of the ungodly, so as to be made no longer the enemies, but the servants of God, and citizens of the heavenly country, when He has stilled the wild passions of our stormy and unstable hearts, and made in them a great calm, on whose surface the rays of His glory may be eternally mirrored.
- A. Haymo.  
Pseudo-Hieron.  
C.  
A.  
S. Bruno Carth.  
R.  
Hugo Card.

12 The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine :  
thou hast laid the foundation of the round world,  
and all that therein is.

- A. CHRIST is LORD of the teaching Church of the Apostles, those *heavens* which send down the dews of holy doctrine, and also of the Church which is taught, the *earth* which drinks in the rain and dew, and in its humility brings forth abundant fruit. The contemplative Saints are His, busied as they are with divine things, of which He is the source and goal; the active Saints are His no less, for He inspires and guides their good works. The heavens and the earth are His, for by the WORD of the LORD were the heavens made, and without Him was not anything made that was made. He laid not only the foundation of the round world of visible nature, but also of that Church Universal which embraces all nations, *founded* on the Rock, established in Him alone, and He claims as His own not the mere space, but all living things therein, the entire body of His elect, rooted and founded in love, destined to enter into the fulness of the Saints. And note that the phrase *round world* is suitably typical of the Church, because the circle alone of linear figures is equidistant at all points from the centre of the space it encloses, and is thus a type of the perfect life, be-
- Ay.  
Hugo Card.  
R.  
Honorius.  
Hugo Card.  
Pseudo-Hieron.  
S. Bruno Carth.



cause, according to the old philosophic definition, "Virtue is the equality of a life which converges towards reason on every side." And thus CHRIST, as the Supreme Wisdom, is the centre of the Church, and the rays of His divine love and grace touch on all sides the circumference of the Church with equal radii, infinite in number.<sup>1</sup>

13 Thou hast made the north and the south :  
Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy Name.

As Tabor and Hermon lie east and west of each other in the Lebanon chain, this verse is the assertion of GOD's creative and governing power over the four quarters of the earth. But the LXX. and Vulgate read the *north and the sea*.<sup>1</sup> Mystically, the North in Holy Writ is usually taken as the symbol of evil, because on the one hand we read of Lucifer, "I will sit also in the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north;" and in Jeremiah we find the threat, "I will bring evil from the north, and great destruction," and as a literal fact, the great empire of Assyria and much of that of Babylon, by which the Jewish nation were so grievously chastised, lay to the north of the Holy Land. And as the north wind is cold and biting, so they will have it that it is an apt type of Satan or of Antichrist himself, lacking the fire of divine love, and nipping with his sharp frosts the blossoms and fruits of holiness in the hearts of men; while the *sea*, bitter, barren, and stormy, is taken of Satan's instruments in the world, the restless and cruel persecutors of the Church, of whom is written, "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." *Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice*. The former of these mountains, noted in early Jewish history as the scene of Barak's victory over Sisera, and believed to be the special mountain from whose summit it was the wont of the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar to give notice of the Paschal moon, had a greater claim to *rejoice* in the latter days, for from its heights, nestling in the plain but a few miles off, Nazareth is still to be seen. And Christian legend, albeit with no sufficient warrant, has named it as the scene of the Transfiguration; while Hermon, less famous, nevertheless so rises up above the plain of Esdraelon as to have within sight the part of Jordan made renowned first by the passage of Joshua, and then by the baptisms of John, including the greatest of all, and Nain,

Lyranus.  
Genebrardus.

Isa. xiv. 13.

S. Basil. M.  
Theodoret.

C.  
Haymo.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

Ay.

Isa. lvii. 20.

Judg. iv. 14.

Deut. xxxiii.  
19.  
Herder.

S. Cyril.  
Hieron.  
S. Johan.  
Damasc.

P.

L.

<sup>1</sup> It should be observed that this sense can be drawn only from the Vulgate and the Prayer Book. The Hebrew *yam* does not include the idea of sphericity, any more than the LXX. *okoumenon*.

<sup>2</sup> The reason is that the Hebrew word for *south* is here *yem* "right hand," spoken of the direction as one looks east. This has been read by the LXX. as *ypa*, "*seas*," with the change of the final letter.



- A. the scene of one of CHRIST's greatest miracles, so that both mountains had full right to *rejoice in His Name*. S. Augustine, supposing *Tabor* to mean *coming light*, explains it as mystically denoting CHRIST, the true Light that cometh into the world; while *Hermon*, which he interprets *his cursing*, implies the overthrow and punishment of Satan as the result of that coming. Others, accepting this etymology, will yet have it that *Tabor* denotes the Jews, illuminated with the light of the law and of grace, and *Hermon* the Gentiles, aliens from God and buried in the sin of idolatry, which it learns to curse and abandon when the light from *Tabor* reaches it. But in truth no such meaning can be extracted at all from the first or certainly from the second of these names. *Tabor* is "lofty," and *Hermon* "desolate," so named from its barren and snow-clad summit.<sup>1</sup> We may therefore see here types of two classes of the righteous, both pleasing to God, and rejoicing in His Name, but differing in vocation and dignity. *Tabor*, a mere hill, with its gentle slope and rounded summit, whence the name is sometimes conjectured to mean "heaped like a navel") studded with trees, and green with shade and sward to its very summit, on which once stood a little town, fitly typifies the Saints of secular life, fruitful in good works, gracious and gentle, pleasant to God and man. But *Hermon*, the desolate, soars above *Tabor* with yet greater beauty and far more striking grandeur. The lonely summit, pure and cool with snow, when all the plain beneath is parched with the blazing sun of a Syrian autumn, denotes the contemplative Saints of the Religious Life, towering upward to God in chastity and lovely contemplation, rejoicing not less, but more than *Tabor*, in spite of their seeming ruggedness and austerity of life.
- Haymo.
- Honorius.
- Gesenius.

14 Thou hast a mighty arm : strong is thy hand,  
and high is thy right hand.

- C. That *mighty arm* of God is CHRIST the SAVIOUR; *mighty*, because with Him being and power are identical, and His strength never wanes, inasmuch as He doth whatsoever He pleases in heaven and earth. Limited to Himself, the mighty arm of CHRIST is that Humanity which He took of Blessed Mary, and wherein He wrought such marvellous works, so that, as she herself exclaims, "He hath showed strength with His arm," and was manifested to be the SON of God with power. *Strong is Thy hand*, comments the Chaldee paraphrase, to redeem Thy people; *high is Thy right hand*, to
- P.  
L.
- S. Luke i.  
51.  
S. Athanasius.  
Targum.

<sup>1</sup> The roots are תָּבֹר "to be high," and מְרֹם "to be desolate," though no doubt *Hermon* may, like *Hormah*, come from מְרֹם, and mean an "accursed" place.

I can offer no conjecture as to the proposed meaning of *Tabor*, unless it be from תָּבֹר *desideravit* (or else תָּבֹר, of תָּבֹר Chald. *rediiit*) and תָּבֹר *lux*.



build up the house of Thy sanctuary. This thought is worked out further by the Christian expositors, who point out that the *hand*, by itself, denotes mere power and efficacy, but the *right hand* implies favour, grace, and protection. Hence the explanation that the *hand* of CHRIST is His power exerted against His enemies, to repress their persecution of His members, while His *right hand* is the justifying grace wherewith He strengthens and lifts up His elect, that He may set them at His right hand in the Judgment, when He will indeed be exalted and high in majesty. And this comes back to the deepest spiritual meaning of the Targum, inasmuch as these elect are the living stones wherewith Messiah builds the temple of God in the heavens. Lorinus, accepting the less beautiful interpretation of several commentators, who see here two degrees of divine strength exerted to punish, ingeniously suggests that the strength of the left hand is exerted in holding a vanquished enemy in a firm grasp, while the right hand is lifted on high to deliver the fatal blow with sword or axe. But nearly all agree that the Judgment is referred to as the special manifestation of God's right hand, whether in punishment or reward, and therefore follows :

Theodoret.

A.  
C.  
The Gloss.

L.  
D. C.  
Agellius.

15 Righteousness and equity are the habitation of thy seat : mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

For *habitation*, LXX. and Vulgate read *preparation*, but the true rendering is *basis*. (Aquila.) *Righteousness*, as more than one commentator points out, often appears in Scripture as a term including kindness, while *equity*, or rather *judgment*, bears a sterner sense, and thus the two bases of CHRIST's throne are reward and punishment. These connote in us fear and hope, to begin our justification, to inspire our devotion. And therefore S. Bernard says very well, " Which of you is there, brethren, who desires to make ready a throne for CHRIST in his soul? Lo, what silks or carpets, what cushions, ought to be prepared? Righteousness and equity are the preparation of His seat. Righteousness is that virtue which giveth every man his own. Give, then, to each what is his, pay your superior, pay your inferior, pay your equal, pay every one that which you owe, and thus you fittingly celebrate the Advent of CHRIST, preparing for Him a seat in righteousness." But lest the thought of the strict judgment of God should overwhelm and crush us with its terror, we are comforted by the next clause, *Mercy and truth shall go before Thy face*. These are the heralds through whom the LORD announces His coming : *mercy*, whereby He blots out our sins, *truth*, whereby He performs His promise of saving to the uttermost those who trust in Him. These are the two disciples whom CHRIST sends before His face into every city and place whither He Himself will come ; yea, into every heart in which He offers to take up His abode, to each of

Beda.  
Cd.  
Bellarmine.

S. Bernard.  
Serm. iii. de  
Adventu.

A.  
Hugo Card.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
S. Luke x. 1.  
D. C.



which, before it can rise to pure contemplation of Him, He sends pardon and grace. And because our King is preceded by such messengers, His true subjects have no cause to dread His coming, for

16 Blessed is the people, O LORD, that can rejoice in thee : they shall walk in the light of thy countenance.

*That can rejoice in Thee.* The A.V., far more forcibly, and closer to the ancient renderings, *that know the joyful sound*. Literally, that is, the blowing of the trumpets of the Jubilee<sup>1</sup> on the evening of the Great Day of Atonement, when ushering in the year of release, when all debts were cancelled, all Hebrew bondsmen set free, and every man returned to his own family, and to the enjoyment of his inheritance and possession. So the Christian, knowing the saving grace of CHRIST, rejoices in that, and cannot rejoice unless he knows it, and understands the source of that joy which is too deep for him to express in words. Thus we sing of that first coming of His, when He ransomed man from the bondage of sin,

Doddridge.

Hark the glad sound, the SAVIOUR comes,  
The SAVIOUR promised long,  
Let every heart prepare a throne,  
And every voice a song.

He comes the prisoners to release  
In Satan's bondage held,  
The gates of brass before Him burst,  
The iron fetters yield.

Haymo.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.  
Ps. cxix.  
105.

And they who do so rejoice in the Incarnation of their LORD, in having Him for brother and friend, walk in His ways, Who is the True Light of the world, the countenance and express image of the FATHER, and that they will do, guided by the illumination of the HOLY SPIRIT. Progressively, moreover, not resting in the one grade of holiness, but going on towards perfection, as the word *walk* denotes. And so it is written, "Thy Word is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my paths." But there is another year of release more perfect in its bounty and restoration than even the first Advent of CHRIST, and unspeakably blessed are the people who will know the sound of the Archangel's trumpet to be indeed a *joyful sound*, to whom it will be the note of victory, before which the walls of the spiritual Jericho fall down for ever, the summons to the marriage banquet of the Lamb, for they

L.

<sup>1</sup> The word *מִצְוָה*, here rendered by A.V., "joyful sound," is the same that appears as "jubilee" in Lev. xxv. 9.



shall then learn the Unknown Song of gladness ineffable, and walk for evermore in rapt contemplation of the adorable Trinity, in the full light of the Beatific Vision. Hugo Card.

17 Their delight shall be daily in thy Name : and in thy righteousness shall they make their boast.

And that because the Name of CHRIST has been their salvation, because the glory is not theirs, but is given to Him. Agellius.  
L.  
This delight shall be *daily*, or *all the day* of this mortal life, and much more in the unending noontide of heaven. In Thy Honorius.  
*righteousness*, because of Thy merits, they who here have been humbled for their sins, and who have cast themselves down in penitence, *shall be exalted*, (A.V., Vulg., &c.) In Hugo Card.  
Thy righteousness, when Thou comest to judgment, they shall be exalted to Thy right hand in glory. They shall be S. Bruno  
Carth.  
exalted, even before that time, by gradual ascent in holiness, by conquering the world, the flesh, and the devil, and treading them under foot ; they shall be exalted ever afterwards by the continual growth of the spiritual capacity and blessedness of the soul in heaven itself, a growth that hath no end, since it is a continual striving unto Him Who is infinite. And note the progress indicated by the terms used, *walk* being spoken of the body, naturally sluggish, *delight*, of the soul grasping at bliss, *exalted* of soul and body rejoined to reign with CHRIST and in CHRIST, "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ;" wherefore, "according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the LORD." Hugo Card.  
S. Athanasius.  
1 Cor. i. 30,  
31.

18 For thou art the glory of their strength : and in thy loving-kindness thou shalt lift up our horns.

CHRIST is *the glory of their strength* not merely because He bestows the grace and power by which they shun evil and effect good, but because that strength itself, or *virtue* (Vulg.) which they exercise, is put forth for His honour by His saints, and not for the sake of any worldly praise or favour. They have it from Him, and they give it to Him, since not of their own free-will or personal holiness, but of His loving-kindness and mercy, He, by humbling Himself to us, and bearing a "horn of salvation in the house of His servant David," hath by that Incarnation of His, lifted up the horn of our human nature, and exalted it, in bodily substance and in spiritual might, to the heavens above. Wherefore the Holy Eastern Church breaks out in song : S. Bruno  
Carth.  
Hugo Card.  
C.  
S. Luke i.  
69.  
Z.

Slaves are set free, and captives ransomed :  
The Nature that He made at first  
He now presenteth to the FATHER,  
The chains of her damnation burst :

S. Joseph.  
Hymnograph.  
Canon for  
Ascension.  
Ode viii.



This the cause that He was born,  
 Adam's race restored,  
 Thou that liftest up our horn,  
 Holy art Thou, LORD!

S. Bernard.  
 Serm. i. de  
 S. Victore.

Seneca,  
 Ep. 79.

And note how *glory* and *virtue* are here united in one phrase. On this S. Bernard teaches us, "The glory which is without virtue comes, surely, without being due, is too hastily desired, is perilously grasped. Virtue is the step to glory, virtue is the mother of glory. Glory is deceitful and beauty is vain, when she has not given them birth, it is she alone to whom glory is justly due and may be safely paid." And with this we may compare the wise saying of a heathen writer: "Glory is the shadow of virtue, and will accompany even those that desire it not. But as our shadow sometimes precedes and sometimes follows us, so glory is sometimes in front of it, and suffers itself to be seen, and sometimes is behind us, and greater, because later, when envy has passed away."

19 For the LORD is our defence: the Holy One of Israel is our King.

Agellius.

H ymo.  
 S. Bruno  
 Carth.

R.

Cicero  
 pro Dejo-  
 taro.  
 Aristot.  
 Eth. Nicom.  
 viii. 12.

*Our defence.* More exactly, *our shield*. And that because the Only-begotten SON protected us with His Body as with a shield, and drew the darts of the enemy away from us upon Himself, procuring our salvation by His death. And the FATHER is our defence too, in that He gives us this *Holy One of Israel* to be *our King*, after the carnal Israel had rejected Him, gives Him to us, Whom we did not choose and appoint of our will. The Vulgate wording, *Our taking-up* (assumptio) *is of the Lord*, has given rise to various comments. Some will have it that the word specially points to the assumption of human nature by CHRIST; others of our being taken up out of mortality and passibility unto salvation; a third view is that it denotes the choosing out the elect from the mass of sinners. And in remembering that the Holy One is our King, we may be taught even by Pagan writers what are His qualifications for His office, what our hopes from His exercise of it. "To be strong, just, severe, grave, high-souled, bounteous, beneficent, liberal, these virtues befit a king." "He is no real king," observes the greatest of ancient philosophers, "for whom his own possessions are not enough, and who does not surpass others in the abundance of all good things. For he who is of this kind, desires nothing further, and will look to, and set before himself, not his own interest, but that of those over whom he rules. . . . The friendship of a king consists in the excellence of his well-doing towards his subjects, for he bestows benefits upon them, at any rate if he be a good king, and has a care



for them, that they may prosper, as a shepherd has for his sheep."

20 Thou spakest sometime in visions unto thy saints, and saidst : I have laid help upon one that is mighty ; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.

In the part of the Psalm which opens with this verse, type and antitype are presented with such close fitness of expression for each, that a dispute has arisen amongst the commentators, whether to take the whole in the bare literal sense, as spoken of David son of Jesse, or the wholly mystical sense, as referring to CHRIST alone, as S. Augustine will have it, or yet again, as referring in one part to David, and in another to CHRIST. But the truest explanation seems to be that which admits the full validity of both methods, for here, unlike the partially similar cases of Psalms xlv. and lxxii., it is possible to accommodate each phrase to David or to CHRIST, according as we are looking at the type or the fulfilment. And in this very outset of the narrative an example is given, for the prophecies which foretold the mighty kingdom of David and his house were not the utterance of one seer, but of three, Samuel, Gad, and Nathan, Saints to whom God spake in visions, while it is no less true of CHRIST, that "to Him give all the Prophets witness," a truth which He enforced when, on the way to Emmaus, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." *I have laid help*, that is, not only I have given help and strength to *one that is mighty*, but I have laid on Him the office and duty of helping them that are weak, and of saving them out of the hand of the enemy. And as David was so helped that he might deliver Israel from Goliath first, and then, as King, from all the enemies round about, and was therefore *chosen out of the people*, from his humble rank as a shepherd, and *exalted* to a throne ; so CHRIST, the Mighty One of God, mighty even in His weakness and humility, was chosen by the FATHER out of His people Israel, born of a poor woman, to fulfil the promise made to Abraham and his seed, and was *exalted* first upon the Cross, then in the Resurrection, and finally in His Ascension.

21 I have found David my servant : with my holy oil have I anointed him.

*Found* implies seeking, and it may be asked how the All-seeing can need to look for anything as though ignorant of its whereabouts. They answer diversely, that the word denotes the care and providence of God in the matter, in that He knew fully what He desired to have, as a man does when

Bellarmine.

A.  
Z.L.  
Acts x. 43.S. Luke  
xxiv. 27.Hugo Card.  
S. Athanasius.

P

S. Bruno  
Carth.

D. C.



- Trevelius. he seeks eagerly after aught; or again, that it signifies the approval with which God regarded His choice, as we say, "*I have found something*," when we light on an object of value in the midst of trifles of no worth. But the truest interpretation sees here that same tender, seeking love which drew down the Good Shepherd to seek and find the sheep which had gone astray, a word which paints to us His diligent care, without hinting that He did not know the precise spot where the wanderer lay. *With My holy oil have I anointed Him.* And as the literal David was thrice anointed king, once by Samuel in Jesse's house at Bethlehem, once at Hebron after the death of Saul, as king over Judah; and again at seven years' end as ruler over all Israel: so also
- Acts x. 38. "God anointed JESUS of Nazareth with the HOLY GHOST and with power" in His Nativity at Bethlehem; a second time over His Church at His Resurrection, when the tyrant who sought His life was overcome, and then only over the small "confederation" (which *Hebron* means) of His Jewish disciples, but a third time in His Ascension to the heavenly Jerusalem, the Vision of Peace, where He, now crowned as King of Glory, was anointed over all heaven and earth, supreme over the Princes of God. He was thrice anointed in another sense also, once as Prophet, once as Priest, and once as King. Observe, the unction is called by God *My holy oil*, by reason of the set directions given to Moses in the Law for its composition and hallowing. But as this oil was strictly limited, under pain of utter destruction, to the consecration of Aaron and his descendants for the Priesthood, and there is no other oil which can be understood by these words, the Rabbins allege that by special revelation and permission Samuel and the other prophets were suffered to anoint David and his posterity therewith, but no other kings. That the fact was so is plain enough, for "Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon."
- Aben Ezra. 1 Kings i. 39. Next, whereas kings had the unction applied in the form of a crown, priests received it in that of an **X**, or decussate cross. And in these two traditions we may see, first, the Priestly character foreshadowed which a King sprung out of Juda, and not of the tribe of Levi (as the Asmonæan princes were), should exercise; while we may note in the second place, that His earthly inauguration as Monarch was with a crown of thorns, His earthly consecration as a Priest with the bloodshedding on the Cross.
- R. Shelomo.
- Heb. vii. 14.

22 My hand shall hold him fast : and my arm shall strengthen him.

- L. They take these words, when applied to our LORD, of the hypostatic union of the Eternal WORD with the humanity of CHRIST JESUS, whereby it was impossible for Him, as man, to fall into any sin. And after pointing out how God's fa-



your caused David's one tribe to draw over to itself the eleven tribes which had ranged themselves under the banner of the house of Saul, albeit the chances seemed overwhelmingly against the weaker party; they remark that the prophecy was not the less fulfilled in CHRIST because He was persecuted to the death, because His whole intention of gathering and establishing His Church was amply fulfilled. And if we take the *David* of the Psalm, as we may well do, tropologically of any faithful soul, or of God's friends and people in general, we shall then see here the promise of help to all such through and from CHRIST, "for in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."

Ay.

Heb. ii. 18.

And then the Carmelite goes on with a quaint minuteness of detail to tell us how He is fitly called the *Hand* of God, for as the hand has five fingers, so He has five especial attributes answering to the special qualities of each finger. He has power, denoted by the thumb, the strongest and most muscular of the digits. He is our guide, directing our judgment, and pointing us the way, as the index, or forefinger is used by men. By the middle finger, the longest of all, is typified His patience and long-suffering. The third finger is that on which rests the wedding-ring, unending, unbroken, the token of abiding love, that love which caused Him to lay down His life to save His enemies. And the little finger, shorter and weaker than the rest, betokens His humility and His suffering for us, when He stretched out His hands upon the Cross.

23 The enemy shall not be able to do him violence:  
the son of wickedness shall not hurt him.

Historically, we may note that, on the one hand, David never lost a battle, even to such a mere skirmish as that in which Asahel was slain; and on the other that the attempts made against his life and throne by single agents of evil, Goliath, Saul, Doeg, Ahithophel, Absalom, Sheba, all ended in failure, though in two cases he was driven into temporary exile. This sense agrees with the address of Nathan to David when foretelling the reign of Solomon and the building of the temple. But the force of the Hebrew seems more fully brought out in the A.V. *The enemy shall not exact upon him*, that is, shall not deal with him as a creditor deals with a defaulting debtor, reduce him to poverty, and bring him into bondage. So runs that conditional promise to Israel, "Thou shalt lend unto many nations, but shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee." But in the highest spiritual sense we cannot take the verse as true of David, in view of his terrible fall in the matter of Bathsheba, and must needs turn to CHRIST in order to find its fulfilment. Accordingly, Origen, ex-Origen.

Bellarmine.

2 Sam. vii. 9.

Agellius.  
R. Kimchi.

Deut. xv. 6.

C.



plaining the first clause (with LXX. and Vulg.) *The enemy shall get no help out of Him*, comments, "We help our enemies when we sin, and thus it is that CHRIST helped them in no respect. . . . For although they said, Come, let us kill Him, and have His inheritance to ourselves, yet this counsel was useless to Satan and the Jews, and their effort fell vainly to the ground, for the SAVIOUR rose again the third day, and trampling upon death, spoiled hell." And whereas, by reason of our sins, the devil can prove some claims against each of us, CHRIST alone, on the other hand, saith truly, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." Wherefore, neither Judas, nor the false witnesses before the Sanhedrim, nor the chief priests before Pilate, were able to bring any charge of guilt home to Him, but were forced to acknowledge His innocence; for "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." They lay stress, moreover, on the LXX. and Vulgate phrase here, "The son of wickedness shall not add to hurt Him," pointing out that David's enemies were often given one chance, so to speak, against him, and a temporary measure of success, as in the case of Absalom, but they could never repeat it. Applying this to CHRIST, they remind us that similarly an apparent victory was granted to His enemies against Him, in that they did succeed in compassing His death, but that His Resurrection put Him finally out of the reach of harming. So, too, one reminds us seasonably, in the interpretation of this Psalm of any righteous soul, that when any one has overcome the devil in a spiritual conflict, by resisting temptation to some particular sin, he thereby weakens the devil's power for all time as regards that special weapon, not only as regards himself, but as regards others also. They will not be totally freed from all trial and temptation thereby, but they will be encouraged, and the devil disheartened by the victories of the Saints, so that they cannot be fatally hurt without their own consent, as it is written, "I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime." Not that the malice of the enemy is lessened by such triumphs of the Saints, for it is rather increased, and his desire to overcome his conqueror is whetted; so that, as S. Thomas warns us, he will return again and again to the attack as long as he sees any remains of sin within us, yet that he grows feebler, and we stronger, after each repulse he suffers.

24 I will smite down his foes before his face : and plague them that hate him.

S. John xiv.  
30.

C.

D. C.

Hugo Card.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

2 Sam. vii.  
10.

S. Greg. M.  
Mor. xxviii.  
28.  
S. Pet.  
Chrysol.  
Serm. 13.  
Summa ii. 6,  
Q. 2, A. 5.

Ay.  
2 Sam. viii.  
2.

This holds literally of David, especially where we read that "he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured



he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive." But it holds much more perfectly of David's Son, before Whose face His tempters so often retreated in confusion, baffled by His wisdom, as though driven away with swords, before Whom the soldiers in the garden on the night of Betrayal, "went backward, and fell to the ground," Who triumphed over His spiritual enemies upon the Cross, and Whose terrible judgments fell upon the sinful nation that rejected Him, albeit He saved alive with one full line the Apostles and other disciples who believed on Him. These too He *smote down* at first, as He did Saul of Tarsus, as He does still with sinners whom He desires to bring to repentance, and to separate from their transgression, and to *put to flight* from their former sinful life, that they may take refuge with Him.

Pseudo-Hieron.

S. John xviii. 6.

C.

25 My truth and my mercy shall be with him :  
and in my Name shall his horn be exalted.

This prophecy cannot be in its fulness taken of David, albeit in a lower sense it is true of him also, but it is perfectly accomplished in CHRIST, for the *mercy* which was with Him is that hypostatic union of the Godhead with the Manhood, which cannot be disjoined, while the *truth* is the fulfilment of the promise to His Mother by the angel, "He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Wherefore His *horn was exalted in the Name* of God, because His power is such that in His Name every knee must bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth. And this Name is the Name of God, for the glory of JESUS is as of the Only-begotten of the FATHER, so that He is worshipped by all as the SON of that eternal FATHER, in Whose Name He comes, so that GOD the FATHER "hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name," which would not be true if the Name of God were still above Himself. And observe, that as "all the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth," so CHRIST is mercy and truth to us, by His pardoning grace, and His faithfulness to His word; and we therefore, if we are desirous of showing our gratitude, and of being conformed to His likeness, are bound to give Him the same, by showing mercy to those in distress, by being true and just in all our dealings.

Bellarmine.

S. Luke i. 33.

Phil. ii. 10.

A.  
Ps. xxv. 9.

26 I will set his dominion also in the sea : and  
his right hand in the floods.

*His dominion.* It should be simply, *his hand*, (A.V., Vulg., &c.) that is, the left hand, as distinguished from the right hand of the next clause. The prophecy was fulfilled



- Agellius. so far as David is concerned, by his victories over the Philistines, four of whose five principal cities, namely, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, and Gaza, were actually on the coast of the Mediterranean sea, while his victory over Hadadezer, king of Zobah, extended the Hebrew monarchy to the river Euphrates on the other side. It is fitly said *his right hand*, because the eastern conquests were more conspicuous and extensive than the western, to which, accordingly, only the left hand is attributed. Mystically, they explain the salt stormy *sea* as the Gentile nations, or the world in general, bitter and turbulent, and the *rivers* as those persons who, greedy of the world's pleasures and gain, rush eagerly on in search of them, as the rivers pour into the sea. Another interpretation sees in the rivers, because of their powerful currents, a type of the kings and princes of the world, who require more forcible constraint than the multitude. On the other hand, a contrary explanation is suggested by the facts that the rivers are of sweet water, that they are not stormy like the sea, that they run in fixed and narrow channels, and that they admit of bridges being built over them for the passage of men; whence they may be taken as types of the righteous and meek, to be set at God's right hand. But the Greek Fathers prefer to explain the *river* as the mystical Jordan, the type of Holy Baptism, where the right hand of CHRIST is placed, either because, as one will have it, only those regenerated in Baptism have the promise of being set on His right in the Judgment; or, as a Latin expositor takes it, because His propitiatory and pardoning might, which is a higher and nobler attribute than His coercive and punitive authority, is exercised in the remission of sins. Not unlike this is that other view which finds in the *sea* and *rivers* types of secular and spiritual things, and reminds us that God gives us greater power of operation in the latter, in that we can achieve higher things therein. And thus a famous preacher tells us that Religious, who have put themselves within the river banks of claustral obedience, in the sweet, calmly flowing life of the convent, keep their right hand there, not in the sea of worldly habits, and receive a special blessing from God.
- 2 Sam. viii. 3.
- A.
- S. Bruno Carth.
- S. Albertus Magnus.
- Eusebius.
- Haymo.
- Hugo Card.
- Philip de la Grève, Serm. 189.

27 He shall call me, Thou art my Father : my God, and my strong salvation.

- Ay. Here they bid us note the singular fact that David nowhere, in all the variety of epithets he applies to God throughout his portion of the Psalter, ever does call Him *Father*, albeit the title occurs once or twice elsewhere in Holy Writ. But when we turn to the sayings of CHRIST, a remarkable difference at once strikes us. The name of *Father* is given by CHRIST to the Almighty about one hundred and forty times, of which fifty-four have the emphatic word *My* prefixed. "Therefore the
- Isa. lxi. 16.  
Jer. xli. 4, 19.  
Eccles. xxiii. 1.
- B.



Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He said also that God was His FATHER, making Himself equal with God." 18. This first part of the verse, then, He speaks according to His Deity; but the latter part, according to His manhood, whereby He is inferior to the FATHER. *My strong salvation.* More literally *the Rock of my salvation*, (A.V.) But LXX. and Vulgate read *the taker-up* (ἀνελήψας, susceptor) of *My salvation*. And that, they say, refers to those two takings-up of CHRIST by His FATHER, the Resurrection and Ascension; or else to the taking-up of human nature in His act of mercy unto salvation. R.

S. John v.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Hugo Card.

28 And I will make him my first-born : higher than the kings of the earth.

This type was, it is true, partly fulfilled in David, in that he, the youngest of seven sons, was set over not only his brethren, but the whole of Israel, and in that he was victorious over all the adjacent countries, "of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah." But the very fact that the promises here seemingly made to David only, are transferred to Solomon in the prophecy of Nathan, teaches us to look further, to Him of whom David the conqueror and Solomon the Wise were but types. He is the *first-born* of the FATHER in four ways. First, as the Eternal Wisdom of God; begotten and predestined before the worlds were made; secondly, as the one only child of His Mother, and therefore called her "first-born Son;" thirdly, because of the Resurrection, whereby He is "the first-born from the dead;" fourthly, because He is "appointed Heir of all things," "that He might be the first-born among many brethren," nay, "the first-born of every creature."

2 Sam. viii.  
12.

Agellius.

2 Sam. vii.  
12.Ay.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Bellarmine.  
Ecclesi.  
xxiv. 9.

Eph. i. 4.

S. Matt. i.

25.

Coloss. i. 18.

Rev. i. 5.

Heb. i. 2.

Rom. viii.

29.  
Col. i. 15.

*Higher than the kings of the earth.* Bellarmine remarks truly enough that even in the widest estimate of the power of David and Solomon, they could not rank in puissance with the Assyrian monarchs, albeit the petty kinglets around were tributary to them, "from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and the border of Egypt," and that we must therefore apply these words to Him only Who is "Prince of the kings of the earth," and Who "hath on His vesture and on His thigh a Name written, KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS," before Whom the mightiest sovereigns now bow their heads, Whose Cross surmounts their royal crowns. Wherefore in the First Vespers of the Nativity, the Antiphon runs, "The Peaceful King is magnified, over all the kings of the whole earth." The word *higher* is noteworthy, for the Hebrew is *עליון*, which, in all other places where it stands alone, or is used of a person in Scripture, is applied

Bellarmine.

2 Chron. ix.  
23, 26.Rev. i. 5;  
xix. 16.

A.

Brevv. Rom.  
Sarlsh.

Bellarmine.

Gesenius.



S. Bruno  
Carth.

to GOD only, and is usually translated *Most High* in the A. V. And thus as He, being GOD, is Most Holy, as well as Most High, He is Chief of all those kings and priests, those saints who have conquered and ruled their own passions and have overcome the world, who exercise in the Church of GOD the double position of priesthood and authority committed to the first-born under the patriarchal dispensation.

29 My mercy will I keep for him for evermore :  
and my covenant shall stand fast with him.

S. Athanasius.

S. John i. 17.

Heb. viii. 13;  
vii. 19.

A.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

The *mercy* of GOD was kept for CHRIST, that is, it was held over until His coming, and was not given under the elder dispensation, "for the Law was given by Moses, but *grace* and truth came by JESUS CHRIST." And because this mercy in the remission of sins is permanent, and cannot be set aside, it is added, *My covenant, My new covenant, shall stand fast*, in contradistinction to the old covenant, which decayed, waxed old, and vanished away, because "the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." And it is for His sake that this new covenant does stand fast, for it was concluded through and in Him. He mediated it, He signed it, He is its surety, its witness, Himself the inheritance bestowed by it, and therewith its co-heir. Others, less forcibly, take the *faithful covenant* to be the fulfilment of the prophetic promises in the person of CHRIST.

30 His seed also will I make to endure for ever :  
and His throne as the days of heaven.

L.

Galatinus.  
R. Akiba.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

A.

S. Bonaventura.

Bellarmino.

It was urged as an objection to the Messiahship of the LORD JESUS by some of the Jews, that He had no earthly progeny, and did not leave descendants, but the answer was easy, that according to high Rabbinical authority, the title of *sons* or *seed* is given to the disciples of a great teacher, as, for example, those of R. Hillel. And accordingly, the favourite explanation of this passage with Christian commentators is that it denotes the perpetual duration of the Church. The *seed* of CHRIST are those who are like unto Him, and follow in His footsteps, who are His *throne*, inasmuch as they yield themselves to His sovereignty, who are *as the days of heaven* by reason of the brightness, clearness, warmth, and purity of their lives. The throne of CHRIST, a Saint tells us, is fourfold: the Church Militant, the Church Triumphant, the faithful soul, and the Blessed Virgin Mother. If we take the verse literally as referring to David, we shall come to the same result, as CHRIST was of his seed according to the flesh, and as the earthly Jewish throne disappeared with Jehoiachin or with Zedekiah, there is no other save the Messiah, to whom the words may be fully said to refer.



81 But if his children forsake my law : and walk not in my judgments ;

82 If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments : I will visit their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges.

Here they raise the question as to how the promises, the gifts and calling, of God can be without repentance, how they can be justly said to be firm and irrevocable, if they can be affected in this wise by the error, folly, or sin, of so unstable a creature as man. And first, the Doctor of Grace most truly answers that God proves His Fatherhood, not abdicates it, by the act of punishment. "For whom the LORD loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons ; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not ?" Our fear should be not lest we should be scourged, but lest we should be disinherited. And God scourges, precisely that He may give us back the heritage we have forfeited. Next, they point out that God does not go back from His promises. What He undertakes to give, that He does give, as the Incarnation of CHRIST, promised to the sinners Adam and Ahaz, establishes. In this manner His fulfilment is absolute. But the enjoyment and benefit to be derived from the thing promised and given is conditional. Thus the literal kingdom over Israel passed from the tribe of Judah to that of Levi, and the spiritual kingdom of the Church, after being first offered to the Jews, was handed over to the Gentiles. The refusal of the chosen people to accept the proffered mercies did not cause withdrawal of them, but only a change in the recipients, as in the case of the marriage-supper of the king's son. Hence we gather that here we have set before us that lesson which is inculcated by so many parables, the mixture of good and bad Christians within the Church, and the double truth that the fall of a part does not involve the ruin of the whole ; but that even the fall itself is capable of recovery. There are four modes of transgression named here, against the *law*, the *judgments*, the *statutes*, and the *commandments* of God. Of these, the *law* is the generic term, including the others under it, or if taken specifically, it denotes the Decalogue ; the *judgments* have to do with the decision of causes, the assignment of rights, and the meting out rewards and punishments ; the *statutes* are the negative or prohibitory rules, laying down certain actions as forbidden ; the *commandments* are the affirmative part of the code, enjoining certain modes of conduct ; and of the third of these it is to be noticed that for *break My statutes*, the margin of A. V., rightly agreeing with the Vulgate, reads *profane My statutes*, whereby we learn the greater heinousness of sins of commission, especially such as involve irreverence in things

Rom. xi. 29.

A.

Heb. xii. 6.

L.

C.

Agellius.

Hugo Card.



- Ay.** sacred, than of any others. And the Carmelite hereupon justly points out that the sin of profanity, especially in the form of idolatry and foreign rites, was that especial one into which several of the descendants of David fell, notably Solomon himself, Ahaz, and Manasseh. There are two degrees of punishment threatened, the *rod*, for the smaller and lighter offences, the *scourges*, for graver and more persistent sin. In the corresponding passage of the Book of Samuel, the warning runs thus, "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men," that is, with punishments such as earthly fathers inflict upon their children, and not too severe for human nature to bear. And by the *rod*, in Holy Writ, fatherly correction is usually signified; whereas the punishment of a judge is with the sword. So, we read of the former, "He that spareth the rod hateth his son;" of the latter, "If a man will not turn, He will whet His sword." Wherefore also He saith Himself, "Repent, or else I will come to thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of My mouth." But the rod and staff of the LORD comfort the wayfarer in the valley of the shadow of death, knowing that the chastisement is given in love. He will take even the *scourges* patiently, because with them too GOD *visits*, as a firm but gentle surgeon who needs to use steel and cautery upon a patient for his healing, and instead of lamenting or resisting, the sick man will say, "Thou hast granted me life and favour, and Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit."
- Haymo.
- 2 Sam. vii. 14.
- Cocceius.
- Titelman. Prov. xlii. 24.
- Ps. vii. 13.
- Rev. ii. 16.
- Ps. xxlii. 4.
- S. Albertus Magnus.
- Job x. 12.

33 Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him : nor suffer my truth to fail.

34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips : I have sworn once by my holiness, that I will not fail David.

- A.** S. Augustine explains these verses in the manner already stated above, that the sin of man cannot make void the promise of God, since His purpose by predestination will stand, and be fulfilled in one, if not in another. It is also an encouragement to hope and to repentance, if we once take in the thought that God's will to pardon never fails, and that our sins are to His mercy what a cobweb is to the storm, a spark to the ocean, sure to be swept away by the might of the one, to be quenched in the abyss of the other. They raise in this place the question as to the repentance and salvation of Solomon, answering it, as do SS. Ambrose, Jerome, and Gregory, in the affirmative; alleging that he was punished by the revolt of the ten tribes from his son, but pardoned himself, granted repentance, and delivered from hell. And S. Jerome mentions a curious Hebrew legend to the effect that the penitent king, entering the Temple, put rods into the hands of cer-
- Le Blanc.
- S. Chrysost. in Ps. l. Hom. de Pœn.
- Ay.**
- S. Hieron.



tain men learned in the law, beseeching them to chastise him, but that they alleged that they dared not put out their hands against the LORD's anointed; whereupon he passed sentence upon himself, and abdicated the throne. *Nor suffer My truth to fail.* The Vulgate rendering, *I will not hurt in My truth*, has drawn from S. Augustine the comment that he who abides not by his promises does hurt, and that sorely, any one who depends on that promise; and furthermore, that he who punishes according to the full rigour of justice, hurts too. And another reminds us that although the enemies of the SON were suffered to work their will upon Him, yet in the truth of the FATHER He was unhurt, inasmuch as His glorious Passion wrought salvation for the world; while a third exposition, practically coinciding with the latter part of S. Augustine's gloss, sees here a promise of final salvation in the day of Judgment, because God's scourges will heal, not injure us. *My lips.* This refers especially, they say, to the utterances of the Prophets, who are the lips wherewith God spake to His people. He will not *alter* the thing which they have spoken, for the LORD Himself saith, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled." *I have sworn once.* Some Hebrew expositors have interpreted this as meaning that God used the formula here given on this occasion only, a theory refuted by its appearance in Amos iv. 2, for the true force of the word is to mark the firmness and irrevocability of the Divine pledge. *In My holiness*, that is, as they variously explain it, by My holy Name; or by My holy place, whether heaven (as it is written, "For I lift up My hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever,") or the Holy of holies in the temple; or in My secret counsel; or, finally, by My Holy One, that is, CHRIST Himself, which agrees with that other saying, "The LORD hath sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength." *I will not fail David.* The A. V. more exactly, with the ancient versions, *I will not lie unto David.* Therefore it is said, I have sworn *once*. How often, asks S. Augustine, would God have to swear, if He had once lied in swearing? He uttered one oath on behalf of our life, when He sent His Only Son to death for us.

A.

C.

Hugo Card.

L.

S. Matt. v.

17.

Agellius.

L.

Targum.

Deut. xxxii.

40.

R.

C.

Isa. lxii. 8.

A.

35 His seed shall endure for ever : and his seat is like as the sun before me.

36 He shall stand fast for evermore as the moon : and as the faithful witness in heaven.

Here, as in the thirtieth verse, we have the assertion of CHRIST's eternity, and the promise of the indefectibility of



Jer. xxxiii.  
20.

the Church. So we read in Jeremiah, who thus gives us the literal sense: "Thus saith the LORD, If ye can break My covenant of the day, and My covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also My covenant be broken with David My servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne." And similarly a heathen poet, writing of the dynasty founded by Vespasian:

Martial,  
Epig. ix. 1.

Manebit altum Flavie decus gentis  
Cum sole et astris, cumque luce Romana,  
Invicta quicquid condidit manus, cœlum est.

The Flavian race shall last in high renown,  
With sun and stars, and light that shines on Rome,  
That which a conqueror's hand has raised, is heaven.

Targum.

*His seat is like as the sun.* That is, as the Chaldee will have it, radiant and glorious as the sun, or else, as other expositors take it, enduring as the sun, a phrase equivalent to the "days of heaven" in the earlier passage. And taking

Bellarmino.

the *seat or throne* (LXX., Vulg.) to mean the Church in which He dwells, we shall note its continuous visibility, and its office of enlightening the world, as both signified hereby. Or if we take the seat to be the righteous soul, wherein CHRIST reigns, we then have His own saying to confirm this one, for He tells us that when He hath ended the judgment, "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their FATHER." *As the moon.* The Rabbinical interpretation of this clause is, that it declares how the house of David should be treated if it fell away from God. Even then it would not be cast off, but would remain as the moon in comparison with the sun, feebler in light and warmth, and suffering decrease almost to extinction, but, nevertheless, returning in due time to the full. S. Augustine, dwelling on the same qualities of the moon, interprets them of our mortal flesh, which here passes through many phases, but will be a

A.

S. Matt.  
xiii. 43.

Cocceius.

A.

C.  
Ay.  
Galatinus.

Ay.

*perfect moon* (Vulg.) in the Resurrection, no longer subject to any change. So too the moon may fitly be the Church Militant here on earth, waxing and waning, and deriving all her light from the Sun of Righteousness. A curious Rabbinical gloss is, that as the sun and moon were created on the fourth day, so they foretold the perpetual kingdom of Messiah, sprung from Judah, the fourth of Jacob's sons. Another commentator, accepting the sun and moon as types of the souls and bodies of the elect, points out four attributes of the sun which correspond to faculties of the soul in bliss: to wit, brightness; swiftness, in that its rays pass instantaneously from east to west; subtilty, in that it penetrates glass without leaving any trace of its passage; and impassibility, because it is not defiled by being brought in contact with any substance that stains. If true of any holy soul, the words



must hold good especially of that undefiled one of whom we read, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners?" Cant. vi. 10. S. Cosmas. Canon for Christmas Day. Hugo Card. whom the Holy Eastern Church styles the "throne of Cherubim." This is the great throne of ivory overlaid with gold, which our Solomon made for Himself; ivory, by reason of her pureness; great, because of humility; a throne, because of her fruitfulness,

Ligna, sedile, manus, ebur, aurum, brachia, scamnum,  
Argentum, leo, Rex, purpura, prævia, gradus.

Wood, seat, hands, ivory, gold, with arms, a stool,  
Silver, king, lion, purple, platform, steps.

That is, firm and incorruptible as the cedars, her charity is the seat which admits repose; the hands, on which the arms rest, her works of lowliness and devotion; the ivory, her purity; the gold, her wisdom; the arms, reminding us of those infant arms so often clasped about her, the embracing tenderness of her nature; the footstool, earthly riches and wisdom which she trod under foot; silver, her tuneless and pure speech; the fourteen lions of the throne, her virtues and gifts (or, as we might rather take them, her seven joyful and seven sorrowful mysteries); the King, that only One Who lay in her bosom, ("the Prince, He shall sit in it"); the purple, her martyrdom of soul at the Cross; the platform, Ezek. xlv. 3. her uplifted perfection, raising her above the level of the earth; the steps, the six grades of holy veneration: namely, reverence, devotion, salutation, good words, obedience, and active compliance.

*As a faithful witness in heaven.* The word *as* does not occur in the Hebrew, and some doubt has thus arisen as to the precise meaning of the clause. A very common interpretation is, that the parallelism requires us to understand the moon to be the witness meant, as it is the arbiter of seasons and festivals; but another, which has met with many supporters, interprets the passage of the rainbow, that witness of God's covenant with Noah; the like of which is round about the throne, and upon the head of the mighty Angel of the Covenant. But the best explanation of all and that most followed by the early commentators, taking the clause, *There is a faithful witness in heaven, sees in the faithful witness CHRIST our GOD Himself.* So holy Job speaks, "Behold, my witness is in heaven;" and the LORD saith by Jeremiah, "I know, and am a witness, saith the LORD;" and further, the epithet is twice directly applied to CHRIST in the Apocalypse, wherein He is styled, the "faithful and true witness." He then, of Whom Isaiah said in old time, "Behold, I have given Him as a Witness to the people;" Who saith of Himself, "For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth," is rightly compared to sun and R. Kimchi. Genebrardus. Rev. iv. 3; x. 1. Jer. xxix. 23. Rev. i. 5; iii. 14. L. Isa. lv. 4. S. John xviii. 37.



Cd. moon, which rule the day and night, for whereas each of these luminaries is hid for a time, and does as it were shut its eyes to the world, "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep," but beholds all things at all times alike clearly, and therefore will know all things, needing not other witnesses, when He sits in judgment.

Ps. cxxi. 4.  
S. August.  
de Civ. Dei,  
ii. 26.

37 But thou hast abhorred and forsaken thine Anointed : and art displeased at him.

R.

Theodoret.

Honorius.

A.

S. Ambros.  
in Ps. xlv.  
S. August.  
de Civ. Dei,  
xvii. 10.

Bellarmino.

A.

S. Ambros.  
in Ps. xlv.

Vit. Zutco-  
lius. Hom. 6  
in Marc.

Theodoret.

Here the whole tone of the Psalm changes, and instead of looking on the glorious picture of stable prosperity, we hear the lament for the overthrow of all the splendours of the Hebrew polity, the total eclipse of its brilliant day. And whether we take this lament as referring especially to Absalom's successful rebellion, to Solomon's own fall, to the revolt under his son, to the Babylonish captivity, or to the yet more disastrous ruin of the second Temple, bringing with it the disappearance of the Aaronic worship as well as that of the Davidic throne, we see in each and all the working out of a divine and providential purpose. For had there been no such reversal experienced, the spiritual growth of the Messianic idea would have been checked in its very bud, and men would have looked to the peaceful splendour of Solomon's reign as fulfilling all the promises of a King and Deliverer, and would thus have never risen out of this material notion into the higher spiritual truth. *Thou hast forsaken Thine Anointed.* It is the cry, they tell us, first of the exiled Jews, seeing the captivity of their two last kings, discrowned and imprisoned. And thus, having regard to the Vulgate reading *distulisti*, which is *Thou hast put off*, S. Augustine explains it of God's continued delay in sending the Messiah to deliver His people; but S. Ambrose more truly expounds the passage as the words of CHRIST Himself, declaring what He has endured, the shame and reproach and suffering of the Cross, and the mysterious abandonment thereon, for the ransom of mankind. A curious view which has been suggested is that the speaker in this verse is God Himself, accusing the Synagogue of its rejection of its King. But the more usual interpretation is sounder, and must be understood, as a Greek Father points out, not of complaint against God's will, far less as any charge of unfaithfulness, but as a prayer for mercy and restoration.

38 Thou hast broken the covenant of thy servant : and cast his crown to the ground.

A.

This verse may be taken in any of three meanings. The *covenant* may here imply the entire Old Testament polity, in which case the *servant* is the Jewish nation, and the *crown*



its spiritual pre-eminence, a view which gains consistency amongst the Fathers from the general explanation of the word *קֹדֶשׁ* (*kylosma, sanctuary*) as the *sanctuary* or *temple*, instead of the royal *diadem*, as S. Jerome rightly translates it. The fuller rendering of the A.V., nearly identical, save for this one word, with the Vulgate, strengthens the notion, by saying, *Thou hast profaned his crown*, as the verb fits in so well with the notion of defiling a shrine. The second view makes the reference more personal, and confines it to the non-fulfilment of the pledge given to David and his house, as proved by the dethronement of his family. And the third, which is also the fullest, sees here the rejection of CHRIST, and the apparent annulling of the promise spoken by Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin at Nazareth, whereby her Son was promised perpetual sovereignty over the house of Jacob. What then was this *crown* of his which was so cast to the ground? One tells us that it is the Sacred Humanity which He took of His dear Mother, wearing which He conquered and destroyed the empire of death, though it was cast to the ground indeed in the Agony, in the nailing to the Rood, in the laying in the tomb. And another takes the verse as referring less to CHRIST Himself than to His Body the Church, and will have us see in this place the sufferings of the Martyrs, the crown of glory, the royal diadem, which He, their King, wears upon His brow.

C.

R.

Honorius.

Cassiod. in  
Cant. iii. 11.S. Bruno  
Carth.Isa. lxiii. 2.  
S. Ambrose.  
in Ps. cxix.

39 Thou hast overthrown all his hedges : and broken down his strong holds.

40 All they that go by spoil him : and he is become a reproach to his neighbours.

Here comes in the metaphor of the vineyard of Israel, whereof Isaiah says, "I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down." And this hedge may well be explained of the Mosaic Law, with all its minute and thorny provisions for separating the Jewish people from the heathen nations around; although several take it to mean literally the battlements and walls of the lesser cities of Palestine; attributing the latter clause of the verse to the fortifications of Jerusalem alone, or even to the citadel of Zion. The LXX. and Vulgate read the last half of the verse, *Thou hast made his strong place a terror*. That is, as they variously explain it, brought terror and dismay amongst the defenders of the last fortresses, so as to lead to their surrender, or else put the stronghold itself into the possession of the enemy, so as to turn it into a means of overawing the native population. Spoken of CHRIST, we may take the words either of the breaking down in the popular mind of that

Isa. v. 5.

Z.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Oddo Ast.

B.  
R.



- "divinity which doth hedge a king," so that the reverence in which He was held for a time gave way before the slander of the Chief Priests; or again, that the multitude of His disciples who once compassed Him about, forsook Him and fled, and that even His strong one, the bold and zealous Peter, was filled with terror, and failed Him in His need. The whole passage, as well as the next verse, applies more strictly to the people than to the king, and deals with him as their representative; whence the transition is easy to the sufferings of the Church in times of persecution, when the prelates, who are the hedge of her solemn usages, and her great teachers, her surest strongholds, fall away or are cut off. For the faithful soul, the hedge, rough with thorns, is penitence, a fence through which Satan cannot force his way, nor yet the allurements of the senses; but where there is no such hedge, entrance is easy; and *all the passers by spoil* and strip the vines bare of their grapes. *They that go by.* That is, as they tell us, all *transgressors*, all who pass over the fixed boundaries of the moral law; or those who pass by and neglect Him Who is the Way, Who was seized and bound in the garden, stripped of His raiment, crucified, and reviled by "all them that passed by." Literally the words tell us of the weakness and contempt into which the Jews had sunk, when every petty tribe around was able to insult, plunder, and wrong them with impunity after their power had been broken by the resistless force of Babylon. The lion had made them his prey first, and then they became a "portion for foxes," scattered abroad in many a land, and *a reproach to their neighbours*. Of CHRIST it was true that He was stripped in His Passion, and that He was made a *reproach*, not only by His citizens, who would not have Him to reign over them, but by His *neighbours*, the foreign tyrant Herod, and the Roman soldiers, who mocked and insulted Him. Nay, more, even after His Ascension, the prophecy held good, for the preaching of the Cross, which was to the Jews a stumbling-block, was to the Greeks foolishness, and therefore received with jeers and derision. And, moreover, the soul which has given way to the enemy, and suffered spoiling when its hedge is broken down, is made the subject of more bitter reproach for its fall, when once it has yielded, than it was before, for refusing to yield in guilty compliance with sinners.
- L. L.
- Hymno.
- Hugo Card.
- Philip de la Grève, Sermon. 191.
- Bellarmino.
- S. Bruno Carth.
- Honorius.
- Ay.
- Ps. lxxiii. 11.
- P.
- L.
- 1 Cor. i. 23.

41 Thou hast set up the right hand of his enemies :  
and made all his adversaries to rejoice.

42 Thou hast taken away the edge of his sword :  
and givest him not victory in the battle.

Agellius. The Psalmist proceeds to dwell on the increasing severity of God's judgments, in that He not merely withdraws His



aid from His Anointed, leaving him thus weak and undefended, but joins the side of his enemies. And the commentators bid us note the contrast here exhibited to the successes of the scanty forces of Gideon, or of the Maccabees, against enormous odds, whereas under Zedekiah "all the men of war fled by night." In dwelling on the power given to CHRIST's enemies against Him in the Passion, and their rejoicing over His death, they remind us not only how Peter was forced to return his sword into its sheath, but that the help of the Eternal WORD of God, that sharp and "two-edged sword," was taken from the Manhood of the Redeemer, so that He had no comfort or support therefrom, nor any aid from those legions of Angels whom the FATHER would have sent Him. We are reminded, too, when the interpretation is transferred to the sufferings of His mystical Body, how, in literal fact, the heathen persecutors used to rejoice, and make festival of the torture and passions of the Martyrs; while Cardinal Hugo, who explains these and the previous verses of scandals in the Church of a later day, whereby it is stripped and plundered, and its discipline broken down by its own evil ministers, so as to make it a reproach to heretics, schismatics, and even to possible converts, declares that an evil prelate, sent as a chastisement to the Church, is the very *right hand* of her enemies, and his promotion a subject of hearty rejoicing to them, because he bears in vain the sword of temporal and spiritual authority. And another, not dissimilarly, warns preachers that their gift of sacred eloquence, albeit the *sword* of the Word, is of no avail to themselves in the battle of personal temptations, if they venture to dispense themselves from self-denial and prayer, not bearing in mind that saying of the Apostle: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

R.

Ay.

2 Kings  
xv. 4.Arnobius.  
Haymo.

Heb. iv. 12.

Hugo Card.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

1 Cor. ix. 27.

43 Thou hast put out his glory : and cast his throne down to the ground.

*His glory.* That is, as Cardinal Bellarmine rightly explains the passage, albeit following the unlike Vulgate reading, all the pomp and splendour of royal attire and surroundings, the external tokens of dignity, as well as the substantial enjoyment of power, denoted by the *throne* of the latter clause. Applied to the nation, rather than to the king, the words will denote the stately ritual of the Temple, which was *made to cease* (A.V.) first for seventy years, and then for ever. The LXX. and Vulgate read, *Thou hast loosed* (LXX., *destroyed* Vulg.) *from purification*, partly misapprehending the meaning of the last word, and this has given rise to various comments. One practically agrees with that just cited, and takes the phrase of the fall of the Temple, because seeing in *purification* (*καθαρσμον*, *emundatione*) a re-

R. Kimchi.  
Bellarmine.  
Agellius.

L.

Targum.

Theodoret.  
Ay.  
D.C.



- A. ference to the ceremonial washings and lustrations of the Law; while S. Augustine will have it that it means the spiritual rejection of the Jews, who could not, because they would not, be cleansed from their sins by faith; and therefore they were punished by their throne, their Holy City, and the whole land which they inhabited, being overwhelmed in total ruin.
- C.

Spoken of the Church in times of laxity, we note that God's punishments at times harden instead of purifying sinners, and overthrow that throne in their hearts on which CHRIST should reign. So exclaims the Prophet: "O LORD, are not Thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return." While in days of fervour and zeal, the Martyrs are slain either because of their very purity, or because slanderous tales of their crimes have been spread abroad in order to make public morality an excuse for persecution, so that the bodies of those Saints who are CHRIST's throne are tortured, slain, and cast to the ground. And in that awful time of the Passion, when the divine glory of the LORD was most of all hidden in His supreme humiliation, when not only the throne offered Him on Palm Sunday was dashed down by the choice of Cæsar as king and Barabbas as leader, but that surer one in the hearts of His chosen disciples seemed shaken to its very foundations; then He was *destroyed from purification* so far as His enemies could effect it, by being numbered with transgressors and felons, and by Himself too, because, all-pure as He was, He took upon Him our sins, and was in a sense defiled thereby, according to His own saying by His Prophet, "Their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment."

Haymo.

Jer. v. 3.

S. Bruno Carth.

Honorius.

Pseudo-Hieron.

Isa. lxiii. 3.

44 The days of his youth hast thou shortened: and covered him with dishonour.

It is obvious that these words cannot be taken literally either of David or of Solomon, each of whom died in full age, after a reign of forty years. But they may apply exactly enough either to the very brief reigns of the later kings of the house of David, especially Jehoahaz, who occupied the throne for only three months in the twenty-third year of his age, and Jehoiakim, who was deposed when but eighteen, after the same brief possession of the crown, while even the two remaining sovereigns, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, were deprived in the prime of their life. Or else the words may point to the entire duration of the dynasty, so much briefer than was to be looked for from the terms of the divine promise, inasmuch as the national life of the Jews was violently interrupted before it reached maturity. And the

Agellius.

2 Chron. xxxvi. 2.

2 Kings xxiv. 8.

Alcuin.

Ay.



phrase *covered him with dishonour* will apply not only to the whole nation, but especially to the disgrace and imprisonment of three of the last monarchs at the hands of Pharaoh-Necho and Nebuchadnezzar, as also to the still more fatal overthrow of the Jewish polity by Vespasian and Titus. But the obvious application to the Lord Jesus, cut off in the flower of His days, and that amidst every mark of shame and insult, has not been neglected by the Fathers. Further, it is explained of the sufferings of the Church, and of the martyrdom and sudden deaths of her noblest and most devout children, while those were spared who were neither eminent nor useful, whose evil living covered their Mother with confusion.

Theodoret.

C.

Eusebius.  
S. Cyril.  
Alex.  
S. August.  
de Civ. Dei,  
xvii. 9.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.

45 LORD, how long wilt thou hide thyself, for ever : and shall thy wrath burn like fire ?

Here the Psalmist, after pouring out his lamentations, betakes himself to prayer, and implores God to send the Deliverer. And the words not only befit the Jews in their first prostration of the Babylonian captivity, but even after their return and the rebuilding of the Temple, for that event did nothing for the restoration of the Davidic throne; rather, in truth, the sacerdotal kingdom of the Maccabees was an additional obstacle to the replacement of the old dynasty. God is said here to *hide* Himself; not that He does change towards us, for with Him there is "no shadow of turning," but that He suffers us to avert ourselves from Him, so that the light of His countenance no longer shines on us. And He is then compared to a monarch who, after condemning a criminal, shuts himself up, lest any one should approach him with a petition for pardon. *For ever?* The LXX. and Vulgate, as usual, translate this *unto the end*, whereon the commentators observe that the question is whether God will continue to hide His face from the Jewish people till the consummation of all things. And they answer, No: because the Apostle saith, "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved." How long then shall His wrath *burn like fire*? So long, exactly, as there is any fuel of sin for the fire to feed upon. And observe that God's wrath is compared to fire, by reason of four properties, according to the various substances on which fire acts. Fire reduces some to ashes, like wood, which is the manner in which obstinate sinners are dealt with by God. It softens others, like lead, which represents the moving to repentance and tears. Others, again, as gold, it purges from dross, denoting change and perfection through suffering. And finally it hardens earthenware, that is, the flame of divine love gives strength and fortitude to what was before weak and yielding, as in the case of the Martyrs. The verse may be taken also as the opening

Bellarmine.

Cocceus.

Ay.  
Agellius.C.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Rom. xi. 25.

Ay.

P.



part of a prayer, either of CHRIST Himself, or of His Body the Church, preceding His Resurrection after the terrible woes of the Passion; and finally, as the petition of a penitent soul seeking reconciliation and peace with God.

46 O remember how short my time is : wherefore hast thou made all men for nought?

Agellius. Seeing, he would say, how soon my life shall end, and that I cannot look forward to a prolonged existence, let me, whilst I still live, see that which Thou hast promised, and behold Thy salvation, the Redeeming King of the seed of David.  
 Bellarmine. It cannot be that Thou hast made man, with all his passionate yearnings after beauty, life, and holiness, for the mere *nought* of this world, full of sorrows and trouble, grief and sin. Send us therefore One who may be our guide to a happier dwelling, our teacher for higher things; send us CHRIST the LORD. The Vulgate, instead of *how short my time is*, reads *what my substance is*, and some of the commentators explain it in a manner practically the same. Because my nature is weak and sinful, because Thou wilt not wantonly destroy Thine own creature, send the Deliverer. But another interpretation, making the words the address of CHRIST to the FATHER, takes them as His appeal on behalf of mankind because He is their Brother, their own flesh and blood, and at the same time He Who has full right to ask what He will, because He is also Consubstantial with the FATHER Himself. And then they may be used of our own prayer to God, reminding Him that we are made in His image, and therefore have a special claim on His mercy, while we call on the SON in the words of the old hymn for Christmas:

C.

Arnobius.

S. Ambros.  
de Fide, 3.

L.

S. August.  
cont. Jul. 3.

The Hymn,  
*Christe, redemptor  
gentium.*

Salvation's Author, call to mind,  
Thou took'st the form of humankind  
When of the Virgin undefiled  
Thou, in man's flesh, becam'st a Child.

47 What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death : and shall he deliver his soul from the hand of hell?

Agellius.

This is the cry of the previous verse put in another form. Not only I, the Psalmist would say, have no hope of seeing the Deliverer unless Thou hasten His coming, but there is no man whose expectation in the matter can be any surer than mine. All are frail and short-lived, wherefore, unless Thy mercy be speedy, all will pass away without beholding the desire of their eyes.

A.

They answer the question by saying that no man ever lived who did not or else will not see death, including even CHRIST



Himself; and the constant tradition of the Church is that Enoch and Elijah, still believed to live, will reappear and die in the days of Antichrist. But while all ransomed souls will live again in the Resurrection, and see death no more, of none can it be said, save of CHRIST, that they delivered their own souls *from the hand of hell*. He raised up Himself by His own divine and inherent power, all His Saints are raised by Him too, by His sustaining grace, and not by any strength or holiness of their own. And therefore He only can say, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." L.  
Hugo Card.  
D. C.  
Hosea xiii. 14.

48 LORD, where are thy old loving-kindnesses : which thou swarest unto David in thy truth ?

He calls them *old*, not merely because they dated from the beginning of David's reign, but because they were but the repetition of promises made to the Patriarchs; and they were old even in their time, because established by God's predestination before the beginning of the world, in His *truth*, that is, in His Only-Begotten Son. C.  
Genebrardus.  
S. Athanasius.  
Hugo Card.

49 Remember, LORD, the rebuke that thy servants have : and how I do bear in my bosom the rebukes of many people ;

50 Wherewith thine enemies have blasphemed thee ; and slandered the footsteps of thine Anointed :

The most usual interpretation of the former of these verses is in agreement with the Prayer Book rendering ; that the people of God were a mock for all the heathen round about ; whether we take the said people as the Jews, in opposition to Gentiles, Christians as contrasted with Pagans, or holy persons in distinction from the worldly and frivolous. These rebukes the whole chosen nation, or the Anointed as its representative, *bears in the bosom*, feeling its wound deeply, but giving no outward token of pain by complaint. But the LXX. and Vulgate are nearer to the original in their reading, for they do not attempt to fill in the ellipse (if it be such) of the second clause : and they read, *which I have borne in my bosom, of many peoples*. The literal Hebrew is, *I have borne in my bosom all many peoples*. And this phrase, to "bear in the bosom," implies elsewhere fostering tenderness, as of a mother, not secret repression, as it must do here if we repeat the word *rebu*ke. A different rendering, somewhat more satisfactory, makes the *many people* the same as the *servants*, but although this is truer to the spiritual meaning of the passage, it yet overlooks the contrast obviously intended between the one nation which serves God and the many na- Targum.  
A.  
Isa. xl. 11,  
xliv. 22.  
C.



- tions which do not. Hence, a modern critic has suggested that the words may fairly be taken as a complaint of the Jewish nation at the intrusion of a number of foreign invaders, settling on the sacred soil of the Holy Land, whom she was thus forced to bear in her bosom. But this again loses sight of the loving sense of that phrase. The truest meaning, that which at once seems to agree most fully with the Hebrew text and with the mystical purport, is half guessed at by one mediæval expositor, who points out that the *rebuke*, the special charge of the Jews against the Anointed One and His servants the Apostles, was precisely that He did not confine His teaching and the divine promises to the children of Israel alone, but that in His embracing love He bore in His bosom *all the peoples*, the whole multitude of the Gentiles, converting them to the Faith, and co-opting them into the commonwealth of the true Israel. With this rebuke they *slandered the footsteps of the Anointed*, because He bent His way to "bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." And so we read that the Pharisees and chief priests, when they sent officers to take Him, said, as the worst calumny they could frame against Him, "Will He go to the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?" But the Rabbinical comment on the verse is different, and very ingenious. It is that the Gentiles rebuke the footsteps of Messiah, because of His delay; that is, they mock and jeer at the Hebrews for looking to the coming of a Deliverer who is so tardy that there is little reason to suppose that He will ever appear. And the same interpretation applies to those unbelievers now who reject the doctrine of CHRIST's second Advent, as the Apostle teaches us: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But the LXX. and Vulgate, instead of *the footsteps*, read *the changing* of Thine Anointed. And for the most part they explain this to mean the passage of CHRIST from life to death, the fatal change which thereby, as the Jews thought, came upon the fortunes of the new teaching, so that they reproached the disciples for worshipping a dead man, just as the Assyrian conquerors mocked at the changed prospects of the Davidic kings, after the overthrow of their realm. Yet that change which CHRIST's enemies mocked at was widely different from what they supposed; for He was changed from temporal to everlasting life, from Jews to Gentiles, from earth to heaven; and thereby He changed the old man by calling him unto the new grace of regeneration, and out of the darkness of sin into the light of faith, from mortality to immortality. And this change of life, wrought by repentance through grace, inducing men to abandon pleasure and accept hardship, to care little for life, and to welcome death, is precisely the thing most jeered at and re-
- Delitzsch.
- R.
- Cocceius.
- Isa. xlii. 1.
- S. John vii. 35.
- Targum.  
R. Kimchi.
- 2 S. Pet. iii. 3.
- A.
- Bellarmino.
- A.
- C.
- Haymo.
- Ay.



viled by unbelievers. S. Albert counts up for us the principal changes of CHRIST; namely, the Incarnation, whereby the Creator became a creature; the Transfiguration, which glorified His humility; the Holy Eucharist, wherein He changes bread and wine into His Flesh and Blood (the chief of all reproaches levelled at the Catholic Faith;) the Passion, wherein He was changed into the pallor of death; the Resurrection, which brought Him back to life. Yet, again, *change* may be taken in the sense of *price*, or *equivalent*, a meaning often borne by the LXX. ἀντάλλαγμα, and the force will then be the ridicule levelled against the Jews by idolaters, for the poor thanks their God gave them for serving Him; a reproach still cast by unbelievers on the doctrine of our ransom through the Blood of CHRIST. Some commentators, however, give an explanation which brings us back to the truest sense, telling us that the wrath of the Jews was mainly excited by those words of the LORD, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate," whereby He implied what was said later in express terms by His Apostles, "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

L.

Agellius.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
Honorius.  
S. Luke xiii.  
35.

Acta xiii. 46.

Praised be the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

With this doxology ends the Third Book of the Psalter, just as a similar one closed the first book at the end of Psalm xli., and the second at the end of Psalm lxxii., and it is supposed by many writers to belong to the book collectively, and not to be an integral part of this particular Psalm. It reminds us, observes S. Augustine, that the power of injury exercised by the adversary against the Anointed of the LORD is fleeting, but the power and goodness of the LORD is everlasting. It teaches us also that our own sorrows and troubles are no reason for omitting the praises of God, but rather a reason for doubling them, as is here done by the forcible repetition of *Amen*, wherewith we welcome our returning LORD, as He comes victorious from the battle, with recovered crown and firmly established throne. Praised be the LORD JESUS by His twofold Church of Jew and Gentile, Amen, Amen; with the double service of soul and body, Amen, Amen; by all His saints in the hour of grace and in the time of glory in this world and the world to come, Amen, Amen.

R. Kimchi.  
Ay.  
De Muis.

A.

Agellius.

Ambobius.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.  
Hugo Card.  
Targum.  
Ric. Hamp.  
Lu.

And therefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD GOD of Hosts; glory be to the SON, His First-born and Anointed, higher than the kings of the earth; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Light of the Countenance of GOD and the holy oil of His elect.



As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :  
world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

Ladolph.

Deliver our souls, O LORD, from the hand of hell ; Who for us didst mightily break hell in pieces, that we, singing Thy mercies, may be delivered from the shame of our sins and from everlasting death. (1.)

Mozarabic.

CHRIST JESU, Wondrous SON of GOD, unto Whom there is none equal nor like amongst the sons of GOD ; unto Thee, O LORD, we direct our prayer, that Thou mayest vouchsafe to bestow on penitents that mercy which Thou hast promised to keep for the saints ; and we therefore beseech Thee to correct us with forbearing discipline, not taking away Thy mercy in Thy wrath, that Thy covenant may not be profaned by reason of the offence we have committed, but Thy chastisement may be assuaged with heavenly pity, and Thou mayest wash away all that displeaseth Thee. And Thou, Who justifiest and glorifiest sinners who return to Thee, and Who didst will that we should be, out of nothing, what we are, grant us to be fitted for the kingdom of heaven and to dwell with Thee for evermore. (11.)

D. C.

O GOD, the glory of the strength of the saints, grant us ever to walk in the light of Thy countenance, and to rejoice in Thy Name, that Thy mercy may ever go before our face, and we, when we have run the race of righteousness to the end, may be enabled to attain unto Thee. (1.)

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### PSALM XC.

**TITLE.** A Prayer of Moses, the man of GOD. Chaldee Targum : A Prayer wherewith Moses the Prophet of GOD prayed when the people, the house of Israel, sinned in the wilderness ; he spoke and said thus :

#### ARGUMENT.

**ARG. THOMAS.** That CHRIST, become the refuge of the people, satisfies us early with His mercy. The Voice of the Apostles to the FATHER. The Apostolic Voice to the LORD. Here the Prophet sheweth that man can hope little from this life.

**VEN. BEDE.** There can be no doubt that such names are attached to the titles as serve to clear up the text of the Psalms by their interpretation. For this reason the name of *Moses* is fitly prefixed to show the force of this supplication, for he oftentimes appeased the LORD's wrath by his prayer, and he was also a minister of the Old Testament, and a Prophet of the New. And because



this Psalm united both these, it is entitled by his name: which is itself radiant with a twofold mystery. For *Moses* is interpreted *Taken up*, because he was lifted out of the waters by Pharaoh's daughter; which thing, by reason of the Red Sea, denotes the Israelites, and by reason of Baptism, the Christians. Otherwise: Because the Psalmist was about to speak of GOD, eternal before the ages, Creator and Ruler of the world, and of mankind as subject to death by reason of sins; all which things he had learned from the sayings of *Moses*, he consecrated by his name, not undeservedly, what he had obtained knowledge of from him.

*Moses* in the first part begins with praise of the Judge: briefly commemorating His benefits and power: LORD, *Thou hast been our refuge*. Then he beseeches Him to help our infirmity, which he describes in many ways: *Turn not man, &c.* Thirdly: He asks that the Advent of the SAVIOUR may quickly appear; Who, as he knew, would bestow blessings on mankind: *Make Thy right hand so known*.

EUSEBIUS OF CESAREA. The rejection of the Jews.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of narrative and prayer.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* Thursday: Lauds.

*Ambrosian.* Wednesday of Second Week: III. Nocturn.

*Parisian.* Thursday: Prime.

*Lyons.* Friday: Compline.

*Quignon.* Wednesday: Nones.

*Eastern Church.* Prime.

#### ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* LORD,\* Thou hast been our refuge.

*Ambrosian.* As preceding Psalm.

*Mozarabic.* The glorious majesty of the LORD our GOD be upon us.

It is to be observed, before entering on the exposition of this glorious Psalm, the opening one of the Fourth Book of the Psalter, that the ancient and mediæval Christian commentators, with almost one voice, adjudge it away from Moses, and decline to accept the title as any authority in the matter. S. Athanasius, S. Augustine, S. Jerome, Beda, Euthymius Zigabenus (who usually follows S. Basil and Theodoret) are agreed on this head with Cardinal Bellarmine, Grotius, and the great majority of modern critics.<sup>1</sup> Bellarmine, after citing S. Augustine's remark, that if the title were genuine, we should find the Psalm in the Pentateuch along with the other songs of Moses, and not in the Psalter; adds another objection, that the verse fixing the age of man at eighty years for its extreme limit is incompatible with the history of Moses himself,

<sup>1</sup> SS. Athanasius and Jerome do indeed call the Psalm by the name of Moses in some parts of their writings, but this appears

to be merely a conventional acceptance of the title to identify it, for elsewhere they cite it as David's.



who, if he wrote the Psalm at all, did so at the close of the forty years' wandering in the desert, when he was a hundred and twenty years old, yet hale and vigorous, and perfectly competent for the conduct of affairs. Nor is it probable that he would have been chosen as leader at eighty years of age, or Aaron as High Priest at eighty-three, if such seniority then implied decrepitude. Further, it may be noted that the Rabbinical tradition, which lays down a canon that uninscribed Psalms are to be taken as the composition of the last person named in the titles, assigns the nine following Psalms to Moses also; a position at once refuted by the mention of Samuel in xcix. 6. And we shall thus most fitly take the title to be merely a personification of Moses by the Psalmist, who speaks in his character.

1 LORD, thou hast been our refuge : from one generation to another.

- Our refuge.* The A. V. more exactly, with Syriac and S. Jerome, *our habitation*. The word *refuge*, then, here signifies a house well fortified and set on a high place, in which such as take refuge are most secure from all harm of enemies, wild beasts, rain, or winds. And truly they who take refuge with God, and who dwell by faith, hope, and charity in Him, as in a fenced citadel, through steadfast meditation and continual desire, are very safe from all attacks of evil, since all things work together for their good. The whole Psalm is a prayer of the Church to the Eternal Son, for His Incarnation, that He may deliver man from the condition of mortality. In the person of Moses the Psalmist recalls God's mercies to him when he was drawn out of the water, when he overcame Pharaoh and his magicians, bringing the children of Israel out of the Red Sea, and when he strove with the rebellious people in the wilderness. Also, as a prayer of the whole Jewish nation to God, it reminds Him of His deliverances wrought in the time of Pharaoh, then under Joshua and the Judges; and lastly, in the return from Babylon.
- And we, in applying the Psalm to our dear LORD, are confessing Him to be our defence from all eternity, in contradiction to those Jews who said to Him, "Thou art not yet fifty years old." He is our refuge from *one generation to another*, because He is shadowed in type and prophecy under the Old Testament, and is revealed in flesh under the New; because He lifts us out of the carnal generation into the spiritual; because He is not only the Creator of heaven and earth, the providential Ruler of man from his first origin, but the Creator of the new heaven and earth of grace, of the new man born again in virtue of the Incarnation. He is our refuge from the world, the flesh, and the devil; He is the refuge of penitents, who flee from sin; of advancing Christians, who flee from the face of temptation; and of the perfect, who flee from the anxieties and bustle of the world. And this is said relatively of Him, not that any change is wrought in His
- Bellarmino.
- S. Bruno Carth.
- C.
- S. Athanasius.
- Ammonius.
- B.
- S. John viii. 57.
- R.
- D. C.
- S. Albertus Magnus.
- Hugo Card.



nature, but that we, being changed, seek shelter with Him, and know Him to be that refuge which He always was. He is our city of refuge, wherein we are safe from the avenger of blood; He is our tower, for "the Name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe;" He is that Captain of the host, Who saith, "If the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee." He is the Teacher, to Whom we cry, "I flee unto Thee to hide me, teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee." He is the dove-cot, to Whom pure souls fly, "as the doves to their windows." He is that tender parent Who exclaimed, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings." And all this not in type alone, but in very deed; in His stooping to us by the humility of His Incarnation, by His endurance of temptation for us, by His prayers, especially in the Agony, and by His Cross, all which are a sure refuge for us from the destructive sin of pride. And on this a Spanish writer says very well, that the one remarkable prayer of Moses to God includes three petitions: first, that God would come in person to lead His people into the land of promise; secondly, that His presence might be a visible one; thirdly, that He would show His glory to His chosen; all which requests are made anew in this psalm, and granted in the coming of the LORD JESUS.

S. August.  
de Trin. v. 16.  
Hugo Card.  
Josh. xx. 2.  
Prov. xviii. 10.  
2 Sam. x. 11.  
Ps. cxliii. 9.  
Isa. lx. 8.  
S. Matt.  
xxiii. 37.

Ay.

P.

Exod. xxxiii. 12, 15, 18.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made: thou art God from everlasting, and world without end.

Besides the obvious literal meaning of these words, whence S. Athanasius and other Fathers draw an argument for the Eternal Godhead of the SON, begotten before all worlds; there are mystical senses indicated, as that the *mountains* denote the exalted angelic powers, and the *earth* the lowliness of man, teaching us thereby that CHRIST was anterior to both. And in the second creation, that of the Church, He was before the Apostles, those great mountains of His, and the whole body of the faithful. His eternity is marked by the threefold form of the latter clause; time past, in that He was *from everlasting*; time present, for we say, *Thou art God*; time future, *world without end*. And when we say *from everlasting*, we do not thereby imply that He had a beginning, nor in using the word *end*, do we hint at a close of His existence, but we signify only His changelessness, that He is eternally the same, and therefore we do not here say *Thou wast God from everlasting*, nor *Thou wilt be God world without end*, but *Thou art God*, the same, past, present, and to come. Wherefore CHRIST saith, "Before Abraham was, I am." Bellarmine points out a certain fitness in the reference to *mountains* in this verse, after the phrase *refuge* in the

S. Athan.  
Orat. 2.  
cont. Arian.  
S. Ambros.  
de fide, iii. 4.  
Arnobius.

A.  
Diodorus.

S. Bonaventura.

A.

D. C.

S. John viii. 58.  
Bellarmine.



preceding one, inasmuch as they are not only the strongest and most prominent objects on earth, but also are refuges in many ways; the first places to be left dry after deluges, the most difficult for enemies to attack with success. And thus, as they are often used as types of the Saints in Holy Writ, we learn that God's love and protection are older, stronger, and higher than even theirs.

Hugo Card.

3 Thou turnest man to destruction : again thou sayest, Come again, ye children of men.

Cocceius.

Here is the curse pronounced against Adam for his sin, and the removal of that curse by CHRIST; the doom of death, and the promise of resurrection. It would be of little avail to us that God is our habitation, if He were not an everlasting one, sufficient for the generation of the world to come, as well as for that of this mortal life; but herein we are taught that He is our eternal Home, for He unites us to Himself, saying, *Come again*, and that from the destruction and dissolution of sin, to the restoration of penitence and the renewal of the defaced Image of God. And here too we see how God, as He causes each generation to pass away into dust, calls a new one into being. But the LXX. and Vulgate read, *Turn not man away to humiliation*.<sup>1</sup> In this we are not to understand the virtue of lowliness, but either the punishment of dissolution or the sin of earthly and carnal thoughts. S. Augustine, taking the latter sense, interprets the verse as a prayer that God will not suffer man to turn away from eternal and lofty things to base and fleeting desires, but may give him grace to glory in God alone. And He saith yet in another place, lest we should doubt His meaning: "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." What answer can we make then save that which follows? "Behold, we come unto Thee, for Thou art the LORD our God;" a stronger refuge than the mountains, for it continues: "Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel."

A.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
Jer. iii. 22,  
-23.

4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday : seeing that is past as a watch in the night.

L.

The Apostle S. Peter supplies us with a gloss on this passage, telling us that its meaning is that God does not really

<sup>1</sup> The cause of this variant is simple. The Name of God, יהוה, is the last word in the Hebrew of the second verse. The LXX. reading it with a different point-

ing, ης, *not*, made it the first word of the third verse. And the Vulgate, though supplying *Deus* in the former verse, yet gives ης a second time as a negative.



delay when He seems to us so to do, but is exhibiting His patience towards mankind: "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the LORD as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The LORD is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." S. Augustine bids us note that the thousand years are compared to *yesterday*, not to *to-morrow*, albeit of equal length, in order to impress upon us the lesson of forgetting things that are behind, and counting them as done with for ever, but that we should "reach forth unto those things which are before," where it is always to-day. And a mediæval commentator observes that the whole life of a sinner (typified, as so often, by the symbolical number *a thousand*), is as *yesterday*, however long he may live. For if you ask a worldly man, How will you spend to-morrow? he will answer, in word or in fact, As I did yesterday. And how was that? I ate, I drank, I talked, I amused myself, I slept. And so it would be with him, were his life prolonged a thousand years. Thus Isaiah speaks of the blind watchmen, who keep not a good *watch in the night*, "We will fill ourselves with strong drink, and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." But if man persist in sinning, God is no less persistent in mercy, and therefore the Greek Fathers remind us that if a man will but hear God's voice saying, *Come again*, and will repent, then, although his life may have been so crowded with sins as to seem as if a thousand years had been needed for their commission, yet they will be nought in His sight, and be blotted out as yesterday is. Eusebius goes into a calculation here, from the literalist point of view, noting that from the building of Solomon's temple to the overthrow of Ezra's second erection, is in round numbers a thousand years, the for ever past yesterday of the Mosaic dispensation. If he had said that a thousand years elapsed from the dedication of the first Temple to the Nativity, he would have been more precise; and a similar cycle embraces the time between the conquests of Joshua and the return of Nehemiah. The life of mankind is here said to be as a *watch in the night*, for three reasons: its briefness, for there were four night watches, of but three hours each; its toilsome anxiety, fitly signifying the perpetual warfare of this mortal state; and its darkness.

A.

Phil. iii. 13.  
Hugo Card.Diodorus.  
S. Greg.  
Nyss.

Eusebius.

C.

Haymo.

5 As soon as thou scatterest them, they are even as a sleep: and fade away suddenly like the grass.

6 In the morning it is green, and groweth up: but in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered.



The first half of the fifth verse runs quite differently in LXX. and Vulgate, and is, with little variance, *Their years shall be nothingness*. The clause is for the most part taken with the preceding verse, and the first interpretation which calls for notice is that of Diodorus, who enforces from the words the lesson of the completeness of God's pardon for repented sins, so that all the years which have been spent in them shall be utterly blotted out of His records. Another observes that we live by only infinitesimal parts of time. Our past life is non-existent, for its days and years are dead; our future life is non-existent, for its hours are not yet born, and therefore we can count only the present instant, which slips from us as we try to grasp it, and is *nothing*. But the truer sense is given by the A. V. agreeing with Symmachus, *Thou carriest them away as with a flood, they are as a sleep*. And the first of these clauses may be taken in two ways, either that the comparison is of life to a river, hurrying resistlessly into the ocean, and unable to stay for an instant in its course, or else that the idea is that of a sudden storm of rain, washing the sky free of clouds, and the ground of light and unfixed objects lying casually about, which are borne away in the torrent, while the word *sleep* reminds us of the manner in which our senses and reason are bound in slumber here on earth, so that we take fictions for truth, and have no power to undeceive ourselves, as well as of the manner in which these visions of the night vanish with our awakening. And so Pindar moralizes—

Pyth. viii.  
136.

ἐνήμεροι· τί δέ τις; τί δ' οὐ τις; σκιὰς ὄναρ  
ἑμβρωτος.

We are creatures of a day. What is any one? what is he not?  
The dream of a shadow, man.

Ps. xxxvi. 8. But of the Saints we may remember that it is spoken, "Thou shalt give them drink of Thy pleasures as out of the river;"  
Isa. xlv. 3. and again, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground;" and yet further, "He giveth His beloved sleep," so that they are hurried away in rapt delight at the thought of God, and sleep, with waking heart, in that contemplation wherein they dream of Him. *Like the grass*. Here they take the *morning* and *evening* to be youth and old age, or, with little difference of meaning, life and death.  
A. We are *cut down* in death, *dried up* as corpses, *withered* into dust. And this is more awfully true of those lives which merely *flourish and pass* (Vulg.) without ever bringing forth actual fruit, for after the morning of this world, when the night of judgment is come, they shall be cut down and cast into hell, suffered to *harden* (Vulg.) in their wickedness, and be *dried up* in the fierce flame of God's wrath against sin.  
R. Once more, they take the *grass* to be the Mosaic Law, given in the morning youth of the nation by CHRIST on Mount Sinai, and abolished in the evening of time, when He came

Hugo Card.



in the flesh. The whole figure is one frequently met in the classical poets, notably in Homer's comparison of men to the successive leaves of a tree, but perhaps the closest parallel to this passage is supplied by Plautus : Cd.

Quasi solstitialis herba paulisper fui,  
Repente exortus sum, repentino occidi.

Plaut.  
Pseudolus,  
i. 1, 36.

Like to a summer plant brief space I was,  
I sprang up suddenly, and sudden fell.

Although the words of our LORD, wherein He speaks of "the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven," may be taken as explaining this sudden decay as the result of external violence, as the action of the scythe, not of natural causes, yet there are not wanting those who prefer to see a reference to those ephemeral plants whose bloom and fading are comprised in a single day. But the most natural explanation is to see noted here the rapid effects of an Eastern sun on the herbage. And so the Apostle S. James, "The sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof fadeth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth," an apt type of the sinner in the presence of God. S. Matt. vi.  
30.  
S. Jas. i. 11.

7 For we consume away in thy displeasure : and are afraid at thy wrathful indignation.

The double chastisement of body and soul is here set before us ; the gradual wasting of our physical frame under the attacks of disease and age, and the mental terrors brought upon us by the thought of God's divine anger against sin. Those who take the whole Psalm as a dirge over the vanished glories of the Hebrew race, explain this verse as denoting that a heavier punishment than falls to the lot of other men had smitten the chosen nation ; whether we take the words as referring specially to the death in the wilderness of all but two of the great host of armed men that came up out of Egypt, to the Babylonian captivity, or to the final dispersion under Titus and Hadrian. And others again prefer to understand it of the gradual shortening of the span of human life, from the centuries of the earliest race to the decades of later times. Titelman.  
Haymo.  
Agellius.  
L.  
D. C.  
Pseudo-Hieron.

8 Thou hast set our misdeeds before thee : and our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

Inasmuch as misdeeds are obliquities, perversities, and deviations from the right, God is said to *set them before Him* when, instead of hiding His face from them, or covering them, He does, as it were, turn them round towards Himself, and fixes His eyes upon them, so that they cannot escape nor be L.  
Ps. li. 9 ;  
xxxii. 1.



- Cajetanus. concealed, but be detected and punished. And in this He acts like earthly judges, who summon criminals before their tribunal, and submit them there to close examination, bringing hidden things into the light of judgment. *Our secret sins.* There is some variety of rendering the Hebrew עֲוֹנוֹת, the LXX. and Vulgate taking it as *our whole duration* (αἰών, sæculum,) S. Jerome rendering *negligentias*, the Chaldee and some others as *youth*, that is, as elsewhere, youthful sins. But the Prayer Book version appears the most satisfactory, and in any case the ultimate meaning will be the same, that it is precisely what seems to us most obscure and forgotten, that will be placed in the full blaze of God's countenance, which does not, like our sight, derive its rays from external objects, but is itself the source of light. The Syriac version, however, keeping to the idea of *youth*, beautifully turns the second clause into a prayer: Because Thou hast set our misdeeds before Thee, *make us grow young in the light of Thy countenance.* Put away from us the old man with his sins; renew in us the image of the New Man, and that by showing
- Genebrardus. Him to us visibly in the flesh, that we may see Him as He is, and thereby become like Him, as the pool becomes like the sun which shines on it.
- 1 S. John iii. 2.

9 For when thou art angry, all our days are gone : we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told.

- S. Bruno Carth. Eusebius. Haymo. The previous verse is taken by several commentators to have a special reference either to the sin of Adam, visited on his posterity, or to the rejection of CHRIST by the Jews, and, consequently, this passage is explained by some to have general reference to the sentence of death pronounced against all mankind for the one cause, or of national overthrow against
- Bellarmino. the Jews specially, for the other. Had it not been for this, the days and years would have still flowed on, but they would have brought none of the evils of age and weakness, far less of decay and death, in their course. *As it were a tale that is told.* There is a considerable variety of interpretation of the Hebrew text here, both amongst ancient and modern critics. The Chaldee turns it, *As the breath of the mouth in winter.* S. Jerome, not unlike our rendering, *As one uttering a speech.* Others again, *as a meditation* (A. V. marg.) or *reverie*;<sup>1</sup> or further, *as a sigh or groan*, a meaning which is the most probable, and agrees with the sense of מַחְשָׁבָה in the two other places where it occurs, Job xxxvii. 2, and Ezek. ii. 10. But the LXX., Æthiopic, and Vulgate agree in translating the
- Targum.

<sup>1</sup> In this sense, favoured by most critics, we have an apt parallel in Theognis :

αἶψα γὰρ ὥστε νόημα παρήχεται  
ἐγλαος ἤβη. For gallant youth  
goes swiftly, like a thought.



whole clause, *meditated (or shall meditate) as a spider*, i.e., a *spider's web*, which fuller form the Arabic gives, agreeing with the Syriac, however, in making the verb mean *fail*, or *glide away*.<sup>1</sup> The fanciful nature of this simile has given birth to a crowd of interpretations. First may be placed that of Cassiodorus, that the lives of sinners are compared to spiders, because their intricate, subtle and yet frail devices for evil ends are like the webs woven to catch flies, while the word *meditate* is used in opposition to *worked*, to show the inutility and vanity of their existence. The web of the spider is very slender, and of no value, like worldly cunning, of which we may take those words of the Prophet, "Moreover, they that work in fine flax, and they that weave net works, shall be confounded." The spider spins its web out of its own entrails, and is thus like the covetous. Its toil is laborious, but rapidly swept away; just as the hypocrite's "hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web." It weaves its web high up in corners, not on level spots, and thus denotes secrecy and cunning. It prefers to spin in deserted houses, and so they whose soul has been abandoned by God, delight in sinister occupations. It works chiefly in the dark, and thus resembles those who shun the light, because their deeds are evil. It hangs downwards from its web by a slender thread, denoting those who are in constant suspense and anxiety about earthly trifles, and it labours hard for a very small result, giving much *meditation* thereto. Others, however, take the word *meditated* in the sense that the years of man shall be reputed or esteemed as no better than spider's webs. Eusebius, reminding us of that saying of Isaiah concerning the wicked Jews, "They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web . . . their webs shall not become garments;" observes that in ancient times the children of Israel wove rich vestments for the High Priests, but that when the Great High Priest came, they wove instead subtle plots against Him with cunning use of Scriptural texts and traditional comments, meaning to snare Him therewith, but vainly.

C.

Hugo Card.

Isa. xix. 9.

Job viii. 14.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Z.

Eusebius.  
Isa. lix. 5.

10 The days of our age are threescore years and ten; and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years: yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.

Omitting the obvious literal interpretation of the verse, let us turn to the spiritual lessons which they draw from it.

<sup>1</sup> There is great difficulty in accounting for this curious rendering. On the one hand, the LXX. may have read  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha$  instead of  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha$ , or else  $\alpha\pi\alpha$  instead of  $\alpha\pi\alpha$ . But there is nothing but mere conjecture to go upon in the matter.



- A. And first, let us hear S. Augustine explaining, according to his wont, the mystical significance of the numbers. *Seventy and eighty* make one hundred and fifty, which the Book of Psalms itself proves to be a sacred number. And its proportional meaning is the same as that of the number fifteen, made up of seven and eight; whereof the former, by reason of the observance of the Sabbath, denotes the Old Testament; the other, the New Testament, because of the LORD's Resurrection. Hence are there fifteen steps of the Temple, the fifteen Songs of degrees amongst the Psalms, hence the waters of the flood prevailed fifteen cubits above the tops of the mountains. Seventy years is the temporal life of the Old Testament; eighty, which is *in power* (Vulg.) that is, in things eternal, is the new life of the New Testament in the hope of renewal and resurrection to immortality, while anything *beyond* (Vulg.) this, anything which transgresses the faith, and seeks for something else, *is but labour and sorrow*. Not very dissimilarly, others say that the word *seventy* denotes active life, as we number our existence here by the seven days of the week, while *eighty*, as suggesting the eighth day, the beginning of a new week, typical of a new life, implies contemplation on earth, and the Beatific Vision in the life to come. *So soon passeth it away, and we are gone*. The A. V. more exactly, with Targum and S. Jerome, *we fly away*. This at once suggests the famous parable of the heathen Thane in the Witan assembled by Edwin of Northumbria to debate on the mission of S. Paulinus. "The present life of man, O King, may be likened to what often happens when thou art sitting at supper with thy thanes and nobles in winter-time. A fire blazes on the hearth, and warms the chamber; outside rages a storm of wind and snow; a sparrow flies in at one door of thy hall, and quickly passes out at the other. For a moment, and while it is within, it is unharmed by the wintry blast, but this brief season of happiness over, it returns to that wintry blast whence it came, and vanishes from thy sight. Such is the brief life of man; we know not what went before it, and we are utterly ignorant as to what shall follow it. If, therefore, this new doctrine contain anything more certain, it justly deserves to be followed." But the LXX. and Vulgate diverge completely from the existing Hebrew text, reading as they do, *For gentleness hath come upon [us, LXX.] and we shall be corrected [instructed LXX.]* That is, as they tell us, we derive at least this advantage from old age, that it breaks down the pride and obstinacy of youth, and we become gentle through consciousness of our feeble condition, and are corrected or instructed into submitting ourselves under the mighty and chastening, but loving hand of God. Or, as another, yet more beautifully, teaches, He Who is gentleness itself, our dear and tender LORD, hath come to us, and will correct us, if we obey not His teachings, but more gently than under the harshness of the Law. Another, ac-
- B.

Beda, Hist.  
ii. 13.

Bellarmino.

C.



cepting *gentleness* as the special epithet of CHRIST, takes the *coming* and *correction* to be that of the last Judgment, when He Who has been so long-suffering with us, saying to us, like His Apostle, "What, shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and the spirit of meekness?" will punish the impenitent. R. 1 Cor. iv. 21.

The LORD shall come, but not the same  
As once in lowliness He came,—  
A silent Lamb before His foes,  
A weary Man, and full of woes.

Heber.

The LORD shall come, a glorious Form,  
With wreath of flame and robe of storm,  
On cherub wings and wings of wind,  
Appointed Judge of all mankind.

But one writer who follows the Vulgate reading, brings us back to the real force, saying, The phrase *We shall be corrected* means *we shall die*, and we shall be *amended*. For death is a general correction, which amends our vices in us, and in what way? By means of gentleness, for it pacifies all. *For gentleness hath come upon us*. The lion dies, the tiger dies, the adder dies, and where then is the lion's valour, the tiger's fierceness, the adder's poison? Now, the lion is not brave, the tiger is not fierce, the adder is not venomous, and all those untamed beasts and monsters are docile now, for death hath tamed them. And if death can work such amendment and change in wild beasts, why should it not do the like in man? A better change, too, than mere stilling of our passions, but like that of which one of our own poets has sung—

Vieyra.  
Sermon for  
Ash-Wed-  
nesday.

. . . . from the Golden Throne the Lord of death  
With love benignant on Ladurlad smiled,  
And gently on his head his blessing laid.  
As sweetly as a child,  
Whom neither thought disturbs nor care encumbers,  
Tired with long play, at close of summer day,  
Lies down and slumbers,  
Even thus as sweet a boon of sleep partaking,  
By Yamen blest, Ladurlad sank to rest.  
Blessed that sleep, more blessed was the waking,  
For on that night a heavenly morning broke,  
The light of heaven was round him when he woke.

Southey,  
*Curse of  
Kehama*,  
xxiv. 26.

11 But who regardeth the power of thy wrath :  
for even thereafter as a man feareth, so is thy dis-  
pleasure.

12 So teach us to number our days : that we may  
apply our hearts unto wisdom.

This rendering is very obscure, and it is simpler to take the A. V., *Who knoweth the power of Thine anger? even ac-*



Rosen-  
müller.

Cocceius.

A.

C.

Agellius.

*cording to Thy fear, so is Thy wrath.* That is, what man can tell the awfulness of God's indignation against sin? seeing that His wrath is proportionable to His majesty, and to the reverential fear we ought to entertain for Him, to guard us from transgressing His precepts. And because no man can do this except God teach him, we then pray Him so to instruct us to understand our brief sojourn here, so to order our lives that we may understand His might and holiness, His justice and wrath as our Judge, our own weakness as miserable sinners, that we may truly repent, and with softened hearts turn to the Eternal Wisdom, the Word of God Himself, and sit meekly at His feet to learn the way of holiness. But the LXX. and Vulgate follow a different reading, and join on the word *number* to the preceding verse, thus: *Who knoweth . . . to number Thine anger in comparison with Thy fear?* which, so far, does not affect the general sense of the passage. But they continue: *So make known Thy right hand,<sup>1</sup> and the instructed in heart in wisdom.* That is, reveal unto us Thy CHRIST, the Right Hand of Thy power, that He, in turn, may make known to us that everlasting felicity which is prepared for those who shall be set on His right hand in the Judgment. And show us not only Him, but as further lessons and examples for us, those Apostles, Martyrs, and Saints who have drunk His wisdom in with thirsty hearts, and have thereby in their lives and doctrine taught us what it is to follow Him.

13 Turn thee, O LORD, at the last : and be gracious unto thy servants.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

R.

Hugo Card.

D. C.

Targum.

Mal. iii. 7.

*At the last.* LXX. and Vulg. rightly, with A. V., *How long?* As long as is Thy good pleasure, so that Thou be gracious unto Thy servants, or as long as is needful for Thee to turn unto us for our salvation; or again, for a time equal to that during which Thou wast turned from us; and, we pray, keep Thyself so turned with the light of Thy countenance shining on us, till we reach our desired end. But the Chaldee takes the sentence as incomplete, and fills it up thus: *How long wilt Thou afflict us?* And He gives us a plain answer: "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts." Then, when we are willing to forsake our sins, He will be entreated for His servants, and *repent* Him (A. V.) of His severity; that is, will like a strict loving parent show tenderness to His converted children, in proportion to the weight of His chastening hand so long as they continued froward.

14 O satisfy us with thy mercy, and that soon : so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

<sup>1</sup> Reading *prop*, instead of *wp*.



15 Comfort us again now after the time that thou hast plagued us : and for the years wherein we have suffered adversity.

*Soon.* Rather, *early*, which the Vulgate turns, *in the morning*. Bellarmine. A.  
*ing.* It is not of the way, but of our Country that these words are spoken. Here, God's love and grace are as a light that shineth in a dark place, in the night and sorrow of this world, in our dimly enlightened hearts, but there, *in the morning*, when we shall see "the day dawn, and the Day-star arise in our hearts," nevermore to set, we shall be satisfied with the mercy of God, that is, with His dear Son. *So shall we rejoice*, "for Thou delightest not in our destruction, inasmuch as Thou makest a calm after the storm, and after crying and tears, Thou pourest in gladness." Wherefore it is added, *After the time that Thou hast plagued us*. "This kind of rejoicing," observes a Saint, "the heavenly citizens would never have known were it not for the children of the Church. For joy comes in good time after sorrow, rest after toil, a haven after shipwreck. All love safety, but he most who has been afraid. Light is pleasant to all, but most to him who escapeth out of the power of darkness. By the passage from death to life grace is doubled in its delightfulness. This is my special portion in the heavenly banquet, apart from those blessed spirits. I am bold to say that the very life of blessedness itself is augmented, and obtains some addition to its perfection through me, by reason of what it enjoys through its love for me, and that to no small extent, for the angels rejoice at the repentance of a sinner. But if my tears are delightful to the angels, what will my delight be to them?" There is a sense in which the prayer was granted even in this world, by the early morning Resurrection of CHRIST, by the descent of the HOLY SPIRIT in fiery tongues at the third hour of the Day of Pentecost. It is granted also to those on whom God bestows the grace of penitence, and inspires with the hope of pardon and salvation after He has chastised them for their sins ; nay, with thankful rejoicing in the very chastisements which have testified His fatherly love, and they learn to "rejoice in the LORD alway" all the days of their earthly life, in preparation for the unending gladness of their promised immortality, in that morning which begins an unending series of days that have no evening.

2 S. Pet. 1.  
 19.  
 C.  
 Tob. iii. 22,  
 Vulg., om.  
 LXX. and  
 A.V.  
 S. Bernard.  
 Serm. in  
 Cant. 68.

D. C.

S. Greg. M.  
 in 1 Sam. 16.  
 Phil. iv. 4.

The night was dark with terror,  
 The morn is bright with gladness ;  
 The Cross becomes our harbour,  
 And we triumph after sadness ;  
 And JESUS to His true ones  
 Brings trophies fair to see :

S. Bern.  
 Cluniac.  
 Rhythmus.



And JESUS shall be loved, and  
Beheld in Galilee :  
Beheld, when morn shall waken  
And shadows shall decay,  
And each true-hearted servant  
Shall shine as doth the day.

16 Show thy servants thy work : and their children thy glory.

Theodor.  
Mopsuest.  
Cocceius.

S. John vi.  
29.

Bellarmino.

C.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

Not *works*, in the plural, like the many sacrifices of the Law. The covenant of grace knows only *one* work, that of CHRIST. *Thy work*. The especial work of God is the salvation of man, to be wrought out by the merits of CHRIST. It is therefore a prayer for His coming, His Resurrection and Ascension, the sending of the HOLY GHOST, and the foundation of the Church, for "this is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." And note that the prayer is twofold, that *we* may see the *work*, and our *children* the *glory*, teaching us thereby that the triumph of the Church is not to be looked for till the work is ended, that the sufferings of the Saints must precede their victories, that the martyrdom of the Apostles is the needful preliminary to the conversion of the Empire. Or, if we take the words of God's work in the soul, their meaning will be, Work in Thy servants by Thy grace, that they may do good works, and let Thy work in the matter be so plain, that others may see their good deeds, and glorify Thee, their FATHER in heaven, and that this holy operation may not cease with them, but be continued for their children too. The LXX. and Vulgate are, however, slightly different here, and read, *Look upon Thy servants, and Thy works, and guide their children*. It is, observes Cassiodorus, a prayer to God to spare the Jewish nation, once His servants, though now rebels, and to guide into the way of salvation the children of those who slew Him. Bless, as another will have it, the work of Thy servants in the ministry of souls, and guide their spiritual children, their converts and pupils, in the right way.

17 And the glorious majesty of the LORD our God be upon us : prosper thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper thou our handywork.

Lyranus.  
R. Shelomo.  
Genebrardus.

There is a twofold Rabbinical tradition respecting this verse and the preceding one ; that they were the original prayer recited by Moses as a blessing on the work of making the Tabernacle and its ornaments, and that subsequently he employed them as the usual formula of benediction for any newly undertaken task, whenever God's *glorious majesty* was to be consulted for an answer by Urim and Thummim. For



us that glorious majesty is CHRIST our King Himself, Whose splendour has enlightened us for ever; it is, further, the illumination of the HOLY GHOST, Whom He has sent us, it is even His own triumphal Cross, wherein we glory, where- with we sign ourselves as a safeguard against evil. So enlightened, so fortified by His prevenient grace, we may begin our part of the great undertaking. When He has shown us His work, and given us clear light wherein to see it, then we may ask for wisdom and strength to carry it on, always under His guidance, to the one perfect work and end of charity, wherein He co-operates throughout with His grace, as He bestowed on us the will and power necessary for a beginning.

S. Athana-  
sius.  
Haymo.  
C.  
P.  
A.  
S. Prosper.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is GOD from everlasting ; glory be to the SON, His Mercy, Who saith to us, Come again, ye children of men ; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Comforter.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

COLLECTS.

Almighty GOD, Creator of the star of light, Who drivest away the night and bringest back the light anew to the world, satisfy us, we beseech Thee, with the renewed shining of Thy mercy, that we may, through Thine illumination, drive away all the darkness of sin. (1.)

Ludolph.

Keep us, O LORD, from one generation to another, and let not us, who have clung to Thy foundation, be carried away with this present world, but arise to be our Comforter in trouble, and by the bestowal of joy wipe away our sorrows. (11.)

Mozarabic.

Let Thy glorious majesty, O LORD, be upon us, and guide Thou the work of our hands, look graciously upon Thy servants, and with Thy light direct the beginnings of good works in us. (11.)

Mozarabic.

Be Thou our Refuge, O LORD, and guide Thy people with Thy fatherly governance, that as the times of our fathers felt Thy cares, so ours also may know Thy bounties towards them. (11.)

Mozarabic.

We beseech Thee, O LORD our SAVIOUR, that Thy glory may shine in our hearts, that Thou mayest cast out from us all assaults of darkness and all foul thoughts, and drive away all sins from our hearts ; so enlighten our darkness that the shades may flee, and glorious light dwell in our hearts. (5.)

Pseudo-  
Hieron.

O LORD, Who art GOD from everlasting and world without end, be Thou in all places our Refuge ; look mercifully upon us Thy servants, and let the glory of Thy Godhead be upon us, that our works may always be guided by Thee, and be finished by Thee when begun. (1.)

D. C.



## PSALM XCI.

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: A Praise of a Song of David.

## ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, returning as Conqueror from hell, trod under foot the head of the lion and of the perverse dragon. The Voice of CHRIST to the believing people, or the Voice of the Church to CHRIST. This Psalm is therefore to be read with the Gospel of Matthew, where CHRIST is tempted. The Voice of the Church to CHRIST. To be read after the Gospel of Mark, where CHRIST is tempted. To be read with the Gospel of John, concerning the Victory of CHRIST. The Voice of the Church to the LORD. A Prayer in the night-season.

VEN. BEDE. *A praise of a song* is the praising of God, *David* should be understood as the Prophet himself. We always oppose this hymn, with pious confidence, to the evil spirits, that they may be overcome by us preferably with that very weapon wherewith they craftily made certain attempts against their Creator.

In the first part the Psalmist declares that every one who is very faithful is fenced with Divine protection. Whoso dwelleth in the help. In the second part, he chants praise to CHRIST, *A thousand shall fall beside Thee*. Thirdly, they are the words of the FATHER to every faithful one, whom He knows to put most devout trust in Him; promising him defence in this world, and rewards in that which is to come. *I will deliver him and bring him to honour*.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, concerning Hezekiah the king, that he should be called the Son of David. Spiritually it is said to be touching the victory of CHRIST, and of every one who is perfected by Him.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm for meditation.

## VARIOUS USES.

<i>Gregorian.</i>	} Daily: Compline. [Dedication of Church: III.
<i>Monastic.</i>	
<i>Ambrosian.</i>	
<i>Parisian.</i>	} Nocturn.]
<i>Lyons.</i>	
<i>Quignon.</i>	
<i>Eastern Church.</i>	Sunday: Compline.
	Sext: Late Evensong.

## ANTIPHONS.

The ferial Antiphons vary with the season, and are not special to the Psalm.

*Gregorian.* Dedication. First verse of Psalm.

*Mosarabic.* He shall abide under the protection of the GOD of heaven: \* he saith to the LORD, Thou art My taker-up.

If you desire, writes S. Athanasius to Marcellinus, to stablish yourself and others in devotion, to know what confidence is to be



reposed in God, and what makes the mind fearless, you will praise God by reciting the ninetyeth (ninety-first) Psalm. Accordingly, we most fitly employ it at Compline as a defence against the snares of the night and the manifold temptations of the evil spirits. And when we do sing it devoutly at that time, we shall often taste its power and sweetness, wherewith it so wondrously and pleasantly abounds. The immediate occasion of the Psalm is not so easily ascertained as its spiritual meaning. Some Rabbinical authorities treat it as a part of the preceding one, while others, more numerous, agreeing with several modern critics, take it as a post-Captivity Psalm, referring to the return under Ezra, and the perils which beset the exiles from the human and animal foes which had taken possession of their old dwelling-places, while a few are found to accept the view of the Syriac Psalter, and to explain the poem as a thanksgiving for the deliverance of Hezekiah from the army of Sennacherib. It is the ninetyeth Psalm in the LXX. and Vulgate, and the mystical import of the number which they give is that ninety, being the product of ten and nine, signifies the number of the faithful who suffer tribulation here, and who shall be made equal to the angels in blessedness, on receiving the crown of life, because *ten* signifies the *denarius*, or penny given by the LORD of the vineyard to the labourers, and nine is the sum of the grades in the angelic hierarchy.

S. Athan. ad  
Marcell.  
D. C.

P.

L.

Honorius.

1 Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High : shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

*Whoso.* This first word denotes that the promise is a universal one ; as though the Prophet were saying, Whosoever he be, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, noble or churl, young or old, it matters not, for God accepteth no man's person, but is rich unto all them that call upon Him. And whereas we may *dwell* in a place, and yet be restless and unquiet there, the Hebrew here is *sitteth*, implying tranquillity and perseverance. Further, the word here translated *defence*, and in LXX. and Vulgate *help*, is more exactly, as in A.V., the *secret place*, a phrase not only denoting its perfect security, but also that it is no visible earthly tower, but an invisible fortress, which faith alone can find and enter. Yet the word *help* is not without its lesson, for it teaches us that devout and firm trust in God does not make man's thought and labour superfluous, but rather stimulates them, in the hope of success through such mighty co-operation. Fitly, too, is the title *Most High* here applied to God our defence, because from His lofty throne He beholdeth all the dwellers upon earth, so that no peril of ours escapes His sight, and also because being supreme in majestic power, He is able to deliver us from them all. *Shall abide*, or, with A.V. margin, *shall lodge*, that is, *shall pass the night*, the whole season of darkness and peril, of trouble and doubt, safely under *the shadow of the clouds of the glory of God*, as the Chaldee paraphrase expands the latter clause. *The Almighty*, עֲלֵי, Genebrardus.



- is translated by LXX. and Vulgate the *God of heaven*. It is He who thus receives, as it were under the shelter of His roof, to lodge there, the suppliant who ventures to sit down at the door of His secret place as a temporary shelter, but who is soon taught that a FATHER's home is open to him. We may learn, remarks S. Bernard, in the beginning of his commentary on this Psalm, who he is who dwelleth under the help of the Most High, by noting who they are that do not dwell there. You will find three sorts of them: those who do not hope, those who despair, and those who hope in vain. The first are such as either trust in their own strength and possessions, or as have cooled in their early zeal, and think that God has no more good things to bestow; the second those who think only of their own weakness, not of God's might, and therefore make no resistance against temptation; and the third are those who forget God's justice, and relying on His mercy, continue in sin. The first of these dwells in his own merits, the second in his chastisements, the third in his vices. The dwelling of the first is sordid, that of the second disquieted, that of the third foolish and perilous. With these we may contrast all holy souls, but especially her whom God chose as the helpmeet for Himself, the Most High, in working out the salvation of mankind by His Incarnation, to whom it was said by the Angel, "The HOLY GHOST shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." Note, too, that the Holy Trinity is declared to us in this verse: the FATHER, Who is the Most High; the SON, His *help* in the work of redemption, as it is said in another Psalm, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty;" the HOLY GHOST, Who is that *shadow of the Almighty* which brooded over Blessed Mary.
- Le Blanc.
- Serm. in  
Qui habitat,  
1.
- Hugo Card.
- S. Luke 1.  
35.
- Honorius.
- Ps. lxxxix.  
30.

2 I will say unto the LORD, Thou art my hope,  
and my stronghold: my God, in him will I trust.

- The sudden change of persons here (not the only one in the Psalm) may be accounted for in two ways, neither of which excludes the other. The Psalmist begins with a general reflection on the blessedness of trust in God; and kindled by the thought, applies it personally to his own spiritual needs, and bursts out with a direct address; and, further, the whole composition may very probably have been designed as an anthem for two or three voices in public worship, the solo parts being all in the first person. In fact the Chaldee does make the Psalm a dialogue between David and Solomon with a chorus. But the LXX., Syriac, Arabic, and Vulgate tide over the difficulty by reading the first word of the verse in the third person. *He will say*, which is not very unlike S. Jerome's *saying*. This he will say as a thanksgiving, making acknowledgment to the LORD and His mercy for His twofold help. For every one who is still dwelling
- Ewald.
- Delitzsch.
- Targum.
- S. Bern.  
Serm. in  
Qui habitat,  
2.



in God's help, is not yet in the kingdom, often needs to flee, and sometimes falls, but he is not dashed down, because the LORD is his *taker-up* (Vulg.) so that he rises stronger when he falls. Let the faithful soul, then, say unto the LORD, *Thou art my taker-up*. All things can say, Thou art my Creator; the very beasts can say, "Thou art my Shepherd;" all men may say, "Thou art my Redeemer," but only he who dwells under the help of the Most High can say, Thou art my *taker-up*, or my *hope*, or again, my *refuge* (A.V.) Observe, too, that the Psalmist continues, *my refuge* (Vulg.) and my God. We have herein three blessings bestowed by God, past, present, and future, for which thanksgiving is made unto Him. First, is His unspeakable mercy, whereby He lifts up man fallen into sin, and sinking further to hell; next, that when God justifies a sinner, He does not at once transfer him to heaven, where are no perils, but places him in the array of His warrior soldiers, yet, if he trust in the LORD, the LORD in turn will be a sure bulwark for him in all temptations. Thirdly, comes the greatest of all the blessings, And *My God*. For God is the Supreme Good, and He will be *our* God when we see Him as He is. And why, seeing that it is so, do we not find *our* God, but *my* God written here? Because in creation, in redemption, and other general bounties, He is God of all; but His elect, each one of them, have Him for their very own in all their temptations, for so ready is He to lift up the falling, and deliver the fugitive, that it seems as though He quitted all the others to help that one alone. Note, too, that it is said, *I will trust*, not, I have trusted, or, I do trust; because here the speaker makes a vow, a resolve, and fixes his intention to persevere.

Bellarmine.

S. Bernard.  
Serm. 2.

3 For he shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunter : and from the noisome pestilence.

*The hunter.* Are we then beasts? Truly so, for "man will not abide in honour, seeing he may be compared unto the beasts that perish." Men are beasts, straying sheep, having no shepherd. And who are the hunters? Evil and wicked ones, most crafty and cruel, hunters who do not sound a horn, lest they should be heard, but "privily shoot at him that is perfect." They are the rulers of the darkness of this world. Now that we know the hunters and the beasts, we must inquire what is the *snare*. The Apostle will show it to us, for he knoweth the thoughts of these hunters, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare." Are the riches of this world, then, the devil's snare? Alas! how few we find, who rejoice in being delivered from such a snare, how many that grieve because they think themselves too little enmeshed, and strive with all their might to involve and entangle themselves therein! The devil and his angels set

S. Bernard.  
Serm. 3.  
Ps. xlix. 12.

Ps. lxxiv. 4.

1 Tim. vi. 9.

A.



their snares, but men who walk in CHRIST walk far from such snares. For Satan does not lay a snare in CHRIST, he sets it all around the way, but not on the way. Let CHRIST be thy way, and thou shalt not fall into the snare of the devil. Go not to left or right, but keep in the straight road, and thou shalt avoid the traps on either side. There are many snares which the hunters lay for us besides riches. The reward of honours, says a Saint, the height of power, the delicacy of diet, and the beauty of an harlot, are the devil's snares :

S. Ambros.  
in S. Lucam,  
cap. iv.

Francis  
Quarles,  
*Emblems*,  
iii. 9.

The close pursuers' busy hands do plant  
Snares in thy substance ; snares attend thy want ;  
Snares in thy credit, snares in thy disgrace ;  
Snares in thy high estate, snares in thy base ;  
Snares tuck thy bed, and snares surround thy board ;  
Snares watch thy thoughts, and snares attack thy word ;  
Snares in thy quiet, snares in thy commotion ;  
Snares in thy diet, snares in thy devotion ;  
Snares lurk in thy resolves, snares in thy doubt ;  
Snares lurk within thy heart, and snares without ;  
Snares are above thy head, and snares beneath ;  
Snares in thy sickness, snares are in thy death.  
Oh ! if these purlieus be so full of danger,  
Great GOD of hearts, the world's sole sovereign ranger,  
Preserve Thy deer ; and let my soul be blest  
In Thy safe forest, where I seek for rest :  
Then let the hell-hounds roar. I fear no ill,  
Rouse me they may, but have no power to kill.

Bellarmino. And so they tell of a favourite stag which belonged to an emperor, that it ranged safely about, because it bore on its neck a collar with the inscription, "I am Cæsar's, touch me not." They bid us observe how the word *hunter* is nearly always used in a bad sense in Scripture, citing as special examples Nimrod, Ishmael, and Esau, while *fisher* is mostly in a good sense. And we are seasonably reminded of those hunters who sought after the life of CHRIST, endeavouring to entangle Him in His speech, but vainly, because Eternal Wisdom delivered Him out of their snares. Cardinal Hugo sums up the points in which evil spirits and wicked men resemble hunters, as follows :

Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
S. Bonaven-  
tura.

Ay.  
Hugo Card.

Ars, cornu, virus, equus, arcus, pallida vestis,  
Decipulæ, laqueus, retia, tela, canes.

Skill, bugle, poison, steed, bow, raiment pale,  
Decoys, snare, nets, shafts, dogs, make up the tale.

That is, they are crafty, they summon their companions to help them : whisperers, and panderers, and evil advisers of men are the bugle round the devil's neck, wherewith he sends out his voice : they poison their arrows with evil suggestions : the horse denotes the pride of the flesh ; the bow denotes



legal subtilty; the pale dress, worn to avoid scaring the prey, signifies the way in which the devil adapts himself so as not to startle his intended booty too soon; the decoys, snares, and nets, are his various artifices; the shafts and darts are temptations; and the dogs, slanderers. And if we bear in mind that hunters lay snares for wild beasts, not for tame and domesticated ones, we shall know that it is only when we follow our own way, and are not God's servants, that we are in any peril from them. *And from the noisome pestilence.* That pestilence is the epidemic of sin, not personal and individual only, but the general frailty of mankind, and the vices which at any given time are current and lightly regarded. It has been taken literally of the plague sent when David numbered the people, and by those who date the Psalm in the time of Hezekiah, as referring to the destruction of Sennacherib's army. But the Vulgate rendering, nearly identical with that of LXX., is *from the harsh word*.<sup>1</sup> This they explain diversely. Many take it of the threats and jeers, or flatteries, used to force or tempt innocent persons into sin; others of the blasphemies of heretics and infidels. S. Bernard, explaining it of the cry of hell for more prey, reminds us of that harsh word, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him," which the LORD bore for us, that He might save us from a yet harsher word, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," an explanation which brings us back to the deepest meaning of *noisome pestilence*.

Bakius.

Cocceius.

De Muis.

A.

S. Bruno

Carth.

Serm. 3.

S. John xix.

15.

S. Matt. xxv.

41.

4 He shall defend thee under his wings, and thou shalt be safe under his feathers : his faithfulness and truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

The verse tells us of the continuance of the divine protection, for it does as it were say, Whilst thou art young, and no match for thine enemies, He will cherish thee under His wings, as the eagle or the hen cherishes her young; but when thou art grown, and able for combat, He will give thee a strong shield that will keep thee unwounded. In Holy Writ God is compared to two birds, the eagle and the hen. We read in Deuteronomy, "As an eagle fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the LORD alone did lead him:" and this denotes CHRIST the LORD in His strength and terrors before the Incarnation. But under the milder Gospel dispensation, where He appears as Man, we find Him saying, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings."

Bellarmine.

Deut. xxxii.

11.

S. Matt.

xxiii. 37.

<sup>1</sup> It is simply a question of pointing. נֶפֶשׁ is *pestilence*, נֶפֶשׁ word or, sometimes, *thing*. The same vocable recurs in verse 6,

and accounts for the variation there between the Vulgate and English versions.



- A. Under these wings we are safe from sun and storm, and from the wheeling hawk. When we see swallows, sparrows, and storks flying in the air, away from their nests, we cannot tell whether they have young, but we know the parent hen by the weak anxious cry, by the lowering of her plumage; she is wholly changed through her love for her chickens, because they are weak, she makes herself weak also. And because
- S. John i. 14. we are weak, the Wisdom of God became weak, for "the WORD was made flesh, and dwelt among us," that we might
- Honorius. trust under His wings. They explain these *wings* in several ways, as the two Testaments, the two precepts of the Gospel, the mercy and justice of God; but better than all is that lovely thought which sees in them the arms of CHRIST extended on the Cross, to shelter the nations from the heat and glare of sin, from the foul birds of prey that are ever hovering in the air. These are the wings in which there is healing, whereof the Prophet speaks. With this accords that wonderful vision of S. Francis, when he beheld a great figure as of a Seraph, with extended arms and conjoined feet, as though fixed to a Cross, and with six wings, two elevated above the head, two extended for flight, and two veiling the body; or, as the form of the vision given by S. Bonaventura runs, the form of the Crucified Himself appeared borne within the wings of the Seraph, and the stigmata of the Passion there beheld made themselves visible in the body of the Saint.
- Honorius. The *feathers* will in this case denote the separate details, the single sorrows, which in their aggregate made up the Passion of CHRIST; while if we look only at His Divine aspect, they may signify the Angel guard ever hovering around Him, and employed by Him as ministers for the protection of mankind.
- His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.* The LXX. and Vulgate differ a little from this, reading, *His truth shall encircle thee*.<sup>1</sup> The word translated *encircle* is, however, a noun from a root קָרַח having that meaning, and probably here stands for a *coat of mail*,<sup>2</sup> a rendering which avoids the mere repetition of the clause in English. The *truth* of Him Who never lies, observes a great Saint, is a mighty *shield*. That Truth is CHRIST, and His shield is the Cross, circled with which we are bold in every combat, and put every enemy to flight. This is the shield of Faith, which the Apostle bids us take, that we may therewith quench all the fiery darts of the enemy. This is that shield of gold which, when the sun shines upon it, makes the mountains glisten, and shine like lamps of fire. "And the grace of divine protection is not inaptly compared to a shield, because it is large and wide in
- S. Athanasius.  
Bellarmine.
- Eph. vi. 16.  
1 Macc. vi. 39.  
S. Bernard, Sermon 5.

<sup>1</sup> Reading קָרַח instead of קָרַח.

<sup>2</sup> The Targum seems to have

understood it as a small target or circular shield, the Latin *parmu-la*, as contrasted with the larger קָרַח.



the upper part, so as to guard the head and shoulders, but below it is narrower, so as to lessen its weight, and because the legs are more slender than the body, and less easily wounded, so that there is not so much danger of a wound there. In this wise CHRIST gives His soldiers for the protection of their lower part, that is, their flesh, narrowness and scantiness of temporal things, nor would have them weighed down by the abundance of such matters, but that having food and raiment, as saith the Apostle, we should be content therewith; but in higher things He gives greater breadth, and abundance of spiritual grace." This is the shield which is better than that one of the warrior Myrtilus, which saved him from such dissimilar perils :

εἷν ἐνὶ κινδύνους ἔφυγον δὴνα Μύρτιλος ὄπλῃ,  
τὸν μὲν ἀριστεύσας, τὸν δ' ἐπινηξάμενος·  
ἀργεστόης δ' ἔδυσε νῶας τρόπιν, ἀσπίδα δ' εἶχον  
σθεθεὶς κεκριμένῃν ὕδατι καὶ πολέμῳ.

Jul. Leonid.  
Epigr.

L.

One weapon in two perils rescued me,  
Once as I fought, once as I swam the sea,  
When the white squall the ship's keel sank, my shield  
Delivered me; thus proved by flood and field.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night : nor for the arrow that flieth by day ;

6 For the pestilence that walketh in darkness : nor for the sickness that destroyeth in the noon-day.

Under these four heads all the perils of mortal life, at every time, are included. For the Hebrew division of the day and night was into four parts; the evening, midnight, morning, and mid-day. And perils themselves are classed under two main heads, secret ones, denoted by the dangers of the night; and open ones, which assail us as it were by day. And they are yet again classed in a different fashion by the commentators, according as they treat them as external to the soul, or arising within it. Thus the sins in the night are those of ignorance, those in the day are conscious and wilful, and are therefore spoken of in more forcible terms. The lesser sins of ignorance, the *terrors by night*, match with the lesser sins of knowledge, the *arrow that flieth by day*, while the grosser ones pair off likewise, the *pestilence that only walketh in the darkness* being thus contrasted with the *sickness that actually slayeth in the noon-day*. So the four phrases may also be taken of the varying methods of persecution employed against the Church by Pagan tyrants, from the threats and blandishments employed against imperfect Christians, easily diverted from the Faith by hope or fear, and not thoroughly knowing the gravity of such a fall, to the actual violence used against fully-matured converts.

Joseph  
Scalliger.  
Epist. 9.  
Theodore.

A.



The original law of persecution, which simply ordained the penalty of death against such as confessed themselves Christians, was the *arrow by day*. But when the craft and cruelty of the heathen waxed greater, then was fulfilled the LORD's parable touching those who received the seed of the Word in stony places, "and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root they withered away," lacking the firm root of Charity. And this heat of persecution blazed out when the new rule was ordained that any one confessing Christianity should no longer be put to death at once, but tortured till he recanted and denied CHRIST. This was the *demon of the noonday* (LXX., Vulg.)<sup>1</sup> which was so especially successful in the Decian persecution, wherein, unlike those which preceded and followed it, care was taken to have altars, images and incense ready at hand in the court, that the accused might be seduced or tempted into sudden apostasy, without having time to fortify their resolution. There is much more force in the LXX. and Vulgate rendering of the first clause of the sixth verse than in the English, by reason of the very vagueness of the word they use, *the THING* (*πράγματος, negotio*) *that walketh in darkness*,<sup>2</sup> a term suggestive of formless dread, more terrible than anything which takes definite shape. But the majority of both Greek and Latin expositors read it as meaning *business*, as something done with forethought and diligence, whence several take it to be the dogmas of heresy, or the deliberate fraud of hypocrites, while the demon of the noonday is either any audacious aggressor who does not condescend to cloak his violence, or Satan when he transforms himself into an Angel of light, as he did when tempting the Redeemer under the pretext of enabling Him to prove His mission. And in this sense, one who reminds us of the light and heat of noonday observes: Light pertains to discretion, and warmth to devotion. The demons, then, come to us with light and splendour, when they assure us, and strive to persuade us, that what we do at their crafty suggestion will be not merely wise, but pious. Again, whereas in hot countries the noon-tide is a period of repose and cessation from labour, the demon of the noonday is sloth, which goes on to *ruin* (LXX., Vulg.) by its temptations to lust, the true child of languid self-indulgence after the mid-day meal. A further exposition is that of S. John Chrysostom, who follows the usual typology of night and day as denoting adversity and prosperity. The terrors of the night of trouble are those things which have

S. Matt. xiii.  
6, 21.

C.

S. Bonaventura.

2 Cor. xi. 14.

Ricard.  
Victorin.  
in loc.

S. Nilus.  
Eusebius.

S. Chrysost.

<sup>1</sup> Reading *τῷ* for *τῷ*. This notion is found in classical literature:

*οὐ θέμις, ὃ ποιῶν, τὸ μεσαμβρινὸν  
οὐ θέμις ἔμμεν  
συρσάμεν. τὸν πάντα δεδοικαμεν.*

We may not, shepherd, may not  
pipe at noon,  
We are afraid of Pan.

Theocr. Id. i. 15.

<sup>2</sup> See note on ver. 3.



no real power to hurt, such as slander and reviling, more dangerous to him that utters than to him who is assailed, unless he by fearing and magnifying them gives them power against himself. The arrow by day is the far more perilous flattery, which begets pride and self-conceit. The thing which walketh in darkness signifies the real calamities and persecutions deliberately planned by evil men against the righteous, while the demon of the noonday means any great crime into which wealth and power tempt men to fall. S. Bernard's gloss is not very remarkable. He takes the terror of the night to be cowardice; the arrow, vain glory; the thing in darkness, ambition or avarice; the demon of the noon-day, as above, temptation to evil under the pretext of good. Better than this is the view which sees here the four stages of sin; first, the secret thought, in the night of the heart; secondly, the resolve to sin, a walking in the twilight, drawing men on to the day of action; then the arrow, hastily and secretly shot, the first rapid commission of the sin, not yet deadly, but capable of being drawn out in time; and then the demon of the noon-day, when the hardened offender makes no attempt to disguise his guilt, but openly glories in it. Again, the terrors of the night may well denote evil demons, and the fear of death; while the perils of the day refer to more tangible objects of dread. Finally, applying the whole passage to the sufferings of our Blessed Lord, they remind us how He was taken by night, and shot at by day. For the Jews shot at Him with their arrows, and sorely grieved Him, when they cried "Crucify Him, crucify Him;" the thing in darkness was the secret council of the Pharisees held by night against Him; and the demon of the noon-day was when the mad populace, instigated by Satan, dragged Him to Calvary, for it was the sixth hour when they crucified Him.

S. Bernard.  
Serm. 6.

P.

Titelman.

Le Blanc.

B.

Gen. xlix.  
23.

7 A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand : but it shall not come nigh thee.

There are three different views put forward as to the noun to be supplied after *a thousand*. It may be the *arrows*, shot in vain against the shield of God, or the *enemies*, routed with heavy loss, or the *fellow soldiers* of the heaven-guarded warrior. All three will hold, and yield a satisfactory meaning, although the last seems to have the most weight on its side. They raise the question why we find in the first clause only *beside thee*, and not *at thy left hand*, which is the obvious sense, and is supplied by the Chaldee. Some will have it that the *left*, as denoting the mere human power of resistance, the free-will of man, is unworthy to be specially named, when we are speaking of the grace of God, which guards us on the right, so that the just man has, mystically, two right sides, and none given over to evil, which the *left* or sinister

Bellarmine.  
Z.  
Theodoret.  
A.

Arnobius.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.



- Eusebius. term denotes. And this notion is enforced by Eusebius, who explains the Psalm of CHRIST, and says that the word *left* is purposely omitted, lest we should suppose any defect to exist in Him. The most ancient gloss on the verse now extant is found in the Apostolical Constitutions, where it is cited as referring to the conversion of the Gentiles, but this does not seem to have commended itself to later expositors.
- Const. Apost. v. 18. That which S. Augustine and Cassiodorus adopt is to see here two classes of persons who will be disappointed in the Day of Judgment in their hopes of salvation, the *thousand* being those who hoped to be assessors at CHRIST's *side* in His tribunal, the ten thousand those who looked for a place at His *right hand* in reward for alms-deeds, but who *shall not come nigh* to Him at all. But there is no clear contrast in this exposition, nor any adequate account of the difference of numbers. Far better than this is the explanation that ten thousand temptations come in time of prosperity, denoted by the right hand, while but a tenth of the number assail us in adversity; but neither can come near him who trusts in GOD, near enough to win his consent and prevail against him. This explanation agrees with the first of the three views named above, for temptations are the arrows, but S. Bernard applies the same notion of the greater peril of prosperity to the third interpretation, saying that many more persons fall into sin and ruin by means of wealth and power than do so in time of adversity; though in his commentary on this Psalm he gives a completely different exposition, taking the thousand on the left to be men jealous of the temporal wealth of the righteous, and the ten thousand on the right, evil spirits warring against all spiritual well-being. Hence he takes occasion to remind us that CHRIST's spear-wound was on the right side, to teach us that thence alone should we drink, there only seek a refuge; while men have their heart on the left side, denoting their preference for earthly things, and bear their shields on the left arm, in token of their anxiety to protect their temporal belongings, whereas the true soldier of CHRIST will be more anxious to guard the right hand side. Parez brings us back to the notion cited from the Apostolical Constitutions, and takes the passage of the victory of the Apostles in effecting conversions, a thousand on the left denoting the temporal ruin of the unbelieving Jews, close at CHRIST's side in kindred and country, but who shall not come nigh Him in His true Country; ten thousand, the far greater company of the Gentiles, smitten down from their idolatry, and placed first as captives and then as conquerors at the right hand of the SAVIOUR. And of such differences as these, between the temporal things denoted by the left hand, and the spiritual by the right, there was a type of old in the songs of the Hebrew maidens after the great battle in which Goliath fell, when they cried
- A. S. Bruno Carth.
- S. Bernard. Sermon. in Dom. Palmarum.
- Serm. 7, in Qui habitat.
- P.
- <sup>1</sup> Sam. xviii. 7.
- "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."



8 Yea, with thine eyes shalt thou behold : and see the reward of the ungodly.

That is, not only will no single one of all those hosts of enemies be able to reach thee, but thou shalt see their total overthrow, as a mere spectator from a place of safety, while God Himself fights for thee, suffering them to come only just so near as to afford a distinct sight of their ruinous defeat. So Moses spake of old to the children of Israel : " Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will show you to-day ; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." And again, when the confederate hosts of Ammon and Moab came up against Jehoshaphat, almost the same words were used by the prophet Jahaziel : " Ye shall not need to fight in this battle : set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem, and fear not, nor be dismayed ; to-morrow go ye out against them ; for the LORD will be with you." In like manner the Christian Church beheld the ruin of her Jewish and Pagan enemies without any effort of her own, and those who abide patiently shall see at the Last Day the overthrow of all forms of evil which seemed too strong for them in this world ; while, if we apply the words to the Head rather than to the members, we shall explain them as meaning that He will behold with His eyes the secrets of all hearts, and cause the universe to see the reward which He brings upon the ungodly.

Titelman.  
Agellius.

Exod. xiv.  
13.

Chron.  
xx. 17.

P.

A.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

9 For thou, LORD, art my hope : thou hast set thine house of defence very high.

There is a difficulty raised by most of the expositors as to the connection between the clauses of this verse, because of the word *thine* in the last hemistich, which seems to them inappropriate to GOD or to CHRIST even as MAN, Who cannot need a defence in the highest, seeing He is Highest already, albeit the Arians cited this text against the Catholics. But there seems no absolute necessity for any such distribution of the verse as makes the second *thou* refer to the righteous man who dwelleth under the defence of the Most High. For a refuge which God provides is His, not ours, except in so far as it is a gift to us, and the meaning may thus be that He has planted His city of refuge (which some take to be the Cross of CHRIST) so high on the Rock that all may see it, and strive upwards towards it, but none come near to attack its citizens. And as the word *art* is not in the Hebrew, we may translate with Aquila and Symmachus, *Thou, Lord, my Hope, hast set Thine house most high*, which is also the sense of the Chaldee and Syriac. But the A.V., LXX., and

Bellarmino.  
Agellius.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

D. C.



most modern critics, who take the word יְהוָה as the title of God Himself, the *Most High*, (*ὁ ὑψιστος*) and not as a mere epithet of His dwelling place, do require the verse to be read in two independent clauses, as addressed to different persons; and this is the sense followed by most expounders of the Vulgate, although its rendering, *Altissimum*, is ambiguous. The first strophe of the verse is thus sung by a solo voice, and the second is the response of the choir to the singer, congratulating him on his choice of God as his hope, and narrating some of the benefits of it. Some few, however, though accepting *Most High* as the title of God, make no break in the verse, but address it all to Him, saying: Thou hast made Thy Refuge, that SAVIOUR Who is the one hope of sinners, that Man in Whom the Godhead dwelt, *Most High*, being a Name above every name, being Co-equal with the FATHER. This comes to nearly the same as the most exact rendering, and fits in with that saying of S. Bernard on the passage; that the soul whose hope is God, and not merely *in* God, can be satisfied with nothing save Himself, and does not want, like Peter, to make Him a tabernacle on earth, nor like Mary Magdalene, merely to touch His feet here, but to clasp Himself for ever. The Acts of S. Afra tell us how she hoped for Him, how she set her house of defence in the *Most High*. "Gaius the Judge said, 'Go up to the Capitol, and sacrifice.' Afra answered: 'CHRIST is my Capitol, Whom I have before mine eyes: to Him I daily confess my sins and wickedness. And because I am unworthy to offer sacrifice to Him, I desire to sacrifice myself for His Name, that the body wherein I have sinned may be cleansed as it suffers punishment.' Gaius the Judge said, 'As I hear thou art a harlot, sacrifice, because thou hast nought to do with the God of Christians.' Afra answered: 'My LORD JESUS CHRIST hath said that He came down from heaven for sinners. For His Gospels bear witness that a harlot washed His feet with her tears, and received pardon; and He never despised harlots and publicans, for He even suffered them to eat with Him.'"

R.  
Honorius.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
S. Bernard.

Ruinart.  
Act. Sincer.  
Martyrum.

10 There shall no evil happen unto thee: neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

Bellarmino.

Herein we have a twofold promise, first that sin, the one *evil* thing, shall not touch the Saint of God; and next that the *plague* (LXX. and Vulg. *scourge*.) or chastisement for sin, shall not come nigh his *tabernacle*, (LXX. and Vulg.) But as in the case of David we know that the evil of sin did happen to him in most grievous fashion, and that heavy scourges were inflicted on him and his house because of it, they ask how this promise can have been fulfilled in his case, or in that of the countless other servants of God who have



fallen into the mire of pollution. The answer is twofold : that the promise belongs to the next world, not to this ; but has regard only to the "blessed necessity of sinlessness" in heaven ; or, as this is hardly comfort enough for those who are sorely beset here, they tell us, that although Saints are not promised absolute immunity from sin, yet by Divine Providence their very sins are turned into agencies for their good, to make them humbler, more watchful, more penetrated with the love of God, as confessing that they owe so very much to His grace and mercy, and that the scourge of temporal punishment which He may be pleased to send upon them is scarcely felt by them, because they dwell in the tabernacle of devout and penitent contemplation, and accept His fatherly chastisement as the earnest of future glory, saying with the Apostle : "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." So, too, in the sufferings of the martyrs, the scourges and tortures of the persecutors could neither avail to overthrow that *tabernacle* of the Church Militant whereof they were the valiant and faithful guards, nor yet, while destroying their bodies, could they reach or harm those pure souls in which the HOLY GHOST was pleased to tabernacle. 2 Cor. vii. 4.

P.

Applying this verse to the LORD JESUS, the King of Martyrs, they remind us that though no evil, no taint of sin could by any possibility touch Him, yet He was scourged, and crucified, and done to death for us, and nevertheless, by rising again from the dead, He reassumed His Divine properties of impassibility and immortality, so that no temporal evil could touch Him any more.

W.  
Ay.

11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee : to keep thee in all thy ways.

12 They shall bear thee in their hands : that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone.

This is the passage, famous for evermore in the spiritual history of man, as that wherewith the Tempter vainly essayed to delude the Redeemer of mankind. And yet, as S. Thomas points out, he showed his ignorance even more than his craft, since the LORD JESUS hath no need of the guardianship of Angels, seeing that He is Himself their strength and stay, "upholding all things by the Word of His power ;" and that even in His mortal condition, He was not tended by any guardian Angel, but supported by the union of the Eternal Wisdom with His human nature in one Person. Wherefore, by the almost general consent of the greatest Christian saints and doctors, we may not interpret this passage directly of the LORD JESUS Himself, but only of those members whose Head He is. But to us, as to the Jewish Church, the passage speaks of that special Providence of God whereby He Summa. 1.  
cxlii. 4.  
Heb. i. 3.



Dan. x. 18.

Origen.  
Hom. sup.  
Num. 30.  
S. Hieron.  
in S. Matt.  
c. 18.  
S. Bernard.  
Serm. 12.

entrusts each one of us to the care of a particular guardian angel, while He sets yet mightier spirits over whole nations of the earth. Each one of us, observes Origen, even the least in the Church of GOD, has beside him a good angel, an angel of the LORD, to rule, to move, to direct him, and who, to amend our doings, and to ask for mercies on our behalf, daily seeth the face of our FATHER which is in heaven. Great is the dignity of souls, comments another Father, in that each has from the beginning of its nativity an angel appointed for its guard. O wonderful condescension, exclaims S. Bernard, and truly great tenderness of love! who is it that hath given charge, to whom is the charge given, concerning what person, and what is the charge itself? It is the Supreme Majesty Who hath given charge to His own angels, those exalted and happy beings ever abiding closest to Himself, as His peculiar servants, and that charge *concerning thee*. Who art thou?

Ps. viii. 4.

"What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" Just as though man were not corruption, and the son of man a worm. What thinkest thou is His charge concerning thee? *to keep thee*. What reverence ought this phrase to inspire in thee, what devotion ought it to bring thee, what confidence bestow on thee! Reverence for the angel's presence, devoutness for his good-will, confidence for his safeguard. Walk heedfully, as one with whom the angels are present, as is commanded thee, *in all thy ways*. In every lodging, in every corner, show reverence for thine angel. Dare not aught when he is present, which thou wouldest not dare in my sight. What then means *in all thy ways*? There are many ways, many kinds of ways, great peril to the wayfarer. How readily may he who lacks knowledge of the ways err in his road where many ways meet!

Serm. 11.

For GOD hath not given His angels charge to keep us in all ways, but in all *our* ways. Let us imagine then what are *our* ways, what are the ways of evil spirits, what those of blessed spirits, and what are the ways of the LORD. The ways of the sons of Adam are occupied in need and longing, the one driving, the other dragging us on. The ways of the evil ones are presumption and obstinacy, and the four steps of descent by which we may fall into these ways are self-flattery, self-ignorance, self-excuse, and contempt of rebuke. The ways of the holy angels are simply told, and that by the Only-Begotten, saying, "Ye shall see the angels of GOD ascending and descending upon the Son of man." They ascend for their own sakes, in contemplation; they descend for our sakes, in compassion. And of His own ways we read, "All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth." To these ways the angels conform themselves, to mercy when they help us, to truth when they seek to know more of Him. And we can imitate them too, making them our own, showing mercy on our own souls by penitence, and our regard for truth by confession of sin. Here our need and longing will find their

S. John i.  
51.

Ps. xxv. 9.



satisfaction, and the angels will not remove us out of our ways, but keep us in them, making those ways to become first their own, and then God's. And that is the meaning for us of that Eucharistic bidding, "Lift up your hearts." And note that the word *ways* is emphatic, for the road of sin, or any place where no duty brings us, is not a way, but a precipice, where the angels are not charged to keep us at all. It is no way, but a ruin; and even if a way, it is thine, not His. They compass us about, unseen, though mighty, with horses and chariots of fire, as they did Elisha in Dothan, they act as our deputies in prayer, as the suggestors of holy thoughts to our waking, and even our sleeping minds. So a devout servant of God says in a hymn endeared to countless thousands :

O may my Guardian, while I sleep,  
Close to my bed his vigils keep;  
His love angelical instil;  
Stop all the avenues of ill.

Ludov.  
Granat.  
2 Kings vi. 17.  
Bishop Ken,  
*Evening  
Hymn.*

May he celestial joys rehearse,  
And thought to thought with me converse,  
Or in my stead, all the night long  
Sing to my God a grateful song.

They discharge other duties besides these towards us. First, they remove obstacles out of our path : "I will send an angel before thee, and will drive out the Canaanite." Secondly, they allay our trials : "The angel of the LORD came down into the oven together with Azarias and his fellows, and smote the flame of the fire out of the oven." Thirdly, they help us against visible foes : "The Angel of the LORD smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand." Fourthly, they present our prayers and alms before God, and pray in their turn for us : "I did bring the remembrance of your prayers before the Holy One." Fifthly, they guide us in the way : "The good angel will keep him company, and his journey shall be prosperous, and he shall return safe." Sixthly, they teach us our duty, and that at times by chastisement, as Gabriel dealt with Zacharias. Seventhly, they reveal themselves and God's secrets, as the same Gabriel did for S. Mary, and Raphael for Tobit. Eighthly, they ward us from sin : "Then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city." Ninthly, they urge us to zeal in God's service : "And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, saying, Arise, and eat." Tenthly, they rebuke us for sin : "And an angel of the LORD said, Ye have not obeyed my voice ; why have ye done this?"

Corderius  
Not. in  
Pseudo-  
Dionys.  
Ccel. Hier.  
arch. ix.  
Exod. xxxiii.  
2.  
Song of  
Three Child.  
26.  
2 Kings xix.  
35.  
Tobit xii. 12;  
v. 21.  
S. Luke i.  
19, 20, 28.  
Tob. xii. 15.  
Gen. xix. 15.

1 Kings xix.  
7.  
Judg. ii. 1, 2.

That there is a special angel entrusted with the guardianship of each person, over and above that camping of the heavenly hosts around the righteous of which we read in

Ps. xxxiv. 7.



Origen, another Psalm, is a conclusion which Origen draws from the words of those who said, when S. Peter, loosed from prison, knocked at their door, "It is his angel:" whence he argues that S. Paul must have had another angel, and so the remaining apostles and brethren. And a similar conclusion is drawn from the words of Jacob, "The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." S. Basil the Great alleges that guardian angels attend only the righteous, and can be driven away from their post by the sins of their charge. "The angel of the LORD," says he, "will encamp round about each believer in the LORD, unless we put him to flight by our evil deeds. For as smoke drives bees away, and a fetid smell banishes doves, so lamentable and fetid sin repels the angel of our life." And he enforces this statement in another place by citing the words of the prophet, "I will take away her hedge," which he interprets as a threat to remove the angel-guard. And S. Peter Damiani inclines to the view that the commencement of this watch over us dates not from our birth, but from our baptism. But the more general opinion is that already given, that every human soul has its particular angel, if not two angels, a good and an evil one, in continual attendance on it. Both these views are found in heathen writers, and a few examples may not be out of place. In the Orphic verses we read:

Orph. Hym.  
ad Musas.

*δαίμονά τ' ἡγάθεον, καὶ δαίμονα πῆμονα θνητῶν.*

The dæmon good, the dæmon ill of men.

Censorinus  
de Die  
Natali, 3.  
Serv. in  
Æn. 6.

Censorinus quotes Euclid, the Socratic philosopher, and Lucilius, as both holding this view, and it will also be found in the notes of Servius on the *Æneid*.

The more common pagan view, however, is the same as the usual Christian one, that there is but one genius to each person, and that one favourable.

Menandri  
Fragm. 21.

*ἅπαντι δαίμων ἀνδρὶ συμπαρίσταται  
εὖθ' ὅς γε γινόμενος, μυσταγωγὸς τοῦ βίου  
ἀγαθός.*

By every man, as he is born, there stands  
A spirit good, a holy guide of life.

Epictet. ap.  
Arrian. Diss.  
i. 14.

And Epictetus, rivalling, as is usual with him, the tone of Christian thought, observes in language which might almost be that of a Chrysostom or an Ambrose, "God has assigned to each individual man a dæmon, as his guardian, and entrusted him to this charge, who never sleeps, and cannot be deceived. For to what stronger or more careful protector could He commit each one of us? Therefore, when you shut the doors, and produce darkness within, remember that you can never say that you are alone, for God is within, and is your dæmon." As regards the two rival angels, it is worthy



of mention that this view is as old as the Shepherd of Hermas, in which it is distinctly laid down.

And an old writer, meeting the possible objection that there is thus an absolute equilibrium of force, leaving the human will practically unaffected, teaches us that the bad angel cannot draw near so long as the good one is present to his sight, but that by God's providence the good one is permitted to become sometimes invisible, in order to allow the other to challenge us to battle, and give us an opportunity of combat and victory, but ready to strike in if we begin to faint.

There is a very curious speculation of Origen as to this matter, which deserves mention. It is that an evil spirit, when once fairly beaten by any man in a struggle, is not allowed to act as a tempter to him or others any longer, but is compelled to go into the abyss, and therefore that every spiritual victory lessens the number of our ghostly foes, and so far hastens the total overthrow of evil, by thinning the ranks of Satan's army.

It is unnecessary to do more than refer to the beautiful legend of S. Frances of Rome, who is alleged to have been favoured with actual vision of her guardian angel, seeing him withdraw when she fell into voluntary sin, and return on her repentance; and on one occasion, when she had been called away several times from her prayers, and had resumed them only to meet with fresh interruptions, to have found the petition she had again and again commenced, written in her office-book with letters of gold, by no human hand.

*They shall bear thee in their hands.* It ought rather to be on their hands, as the LXX. rightly translates it, as nurses carry infants. And these *hands* are the twofold thought they suggest to our minds, the shortness of our trouble here, the eternity of recompense hereafter; or are their understanding and will. This they do lest men should *dash their foot*, that is, their affective qualities, and especially love or fear, those two feet of the soul, against any stumbling-block whatsoever, by sinning through either of these. And there are two especial meanings of the *stone*, on which they lay stress; first, that it denotes the Law, written on tables of stone, a constant stumbling-block to sinners; and next, that it is CHRIST Himself, the chief Corner-stone, for there were and are many who "stumbled at that stumbling-stone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed." We stumble against this stone whenever we sin against His precepts, or whenever we murmur at Him or are ashamed of Him and of His Cross. But if we be not so, happy are we in our journey, carried by such hands, whether here *in our ways*, or lifted up at the end of our mortal journey by the same holy guardians into our place of rest. Both these ideas are prominent in the old hymn to the guardian angel:

In each place and time of need  
From the foe protect me,

Hermas  
Pastor,  
Mand. 6.  
Auct. Operis  
Imperf. in  
Matth.  
Hom. 5.

Origen,  
Hom. in  
Josue. 15.

Le Blanc.  
cf. Numb.  
xi. 12.  
S. Bernard.

Bellarmino.

C.

Rom. ix. 33.

S. Bernard.

The Hymn,  
Salve mi  
angelice.



And in thought, and word, and deed,  
Evermore direct me.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Teach, assist me, and incite  
To endure temptation,  
Guide me in life's path aright  
Till I reach salvation.  
When I die, to soothe me speed,  
Sweetest comfort giving,  
And from every peril freed,  
Bring me with the living  
Heavenward to the courts of day,  
Where, without cessation,  
God is praised, and where for aye  
Is true consolation.

- A. Of the LORD Himself, S. Augustine tells us He was borne at His Ascension into Heaven by the ministering of angels, yet that His *feet*, to wit, His Apostles, by whom He travelled into many lands, were still on earth, liable to stumble against the stony tables of the Law, until such time as they were filled with the HOLY GHOST, to give His grace and love, and to cast out the fear which was the one sanction of the elder code.

13 Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet.

Origen.  
Lib. I. in Job.

S. Bernard.  
in lib. ii.  
Sent. 2, li. 1.

S. Basil. M.  
S. Luke x.  
19.

Bellarmino.  
Tertullian.  
c. Marcion.

Z.

Hos. ii. 18.

Job v. 23.

There is a tradition of great antiquity in the Christian Church that a particular evil spirit is appointed by Satan to make war against the soul of each human being, and to thwart, as far as may be, the influence of the guardian angel. It is of victory over demons such as these that the verse especially tells us, for, as a Saint observes, the good angel is more ready to keep us in the right way than the evil one to cast us headlong into evil. Strength and violence are denoted by the *lion*, craft and venom by the *adder* and *dragon*. And then comes in CHRIST's promise to His disciples, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." Closely allied to this meaning is that which sees in the creatures here named various forms of sin, which men overcome with the help of the angels; and a third interpretation, more literally, sees a promise of such protection as was given to Daniel in the den of lions; for CHRIST, the Child who played on the hole of the asp, and put His hand on the cockatrice' den, can give power like His own to the Saints, as He saith Himself: "In that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground," so that will come to pass which Eliphaz the Temanite spake, "the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee."



The LXX. and Vulgate read as the four names, the *asp* and *basilisk*, the *lion* and *dragon*. There is much variety of explanation, beginning with that of S. Irenæus, which is that the *asp*, erecting and swelling itself, and making men cold with its bite, is sin; the *basilisk*, or king-serpent, is death, once sovereign over the world; the *lion* is Antichrist, and the *dragon* Satan himself. S. Bernard takes the *asp* or adder to be obstinacy, stopping its ears against wholesome counsel; the *basilisk* to be envy, or the evil eye, (referring to the basilisk's fabled power of fascination;) the *lion* to be idle fear, excited by mere roaring; the *dragon*, with its pestilential breath, to be anger. The beasts also signify the four chief persecutions of the Church; first, that of those deaf adders or asps, the unbelieving Jews; secondly, that of heretics, signified by the basilisk; thirdly, the lion-rage of Pagan hostility; fourth, and worst of all, that of Antichrist. But the most usual interpretation is to see here one and the same enemy of souls, described in fourfold manner, according to the arts he employs for the injury of mankind, but in each and all, confronted and dismayed by that promise made to the Saints by the voice of the Apostle: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

S. Irenæus  
Hæc. iii. 23.

S. Bernard.  
Serm. 14.

Bellarmino.

Titelman.

Cd.

Rom. xvi.  
20.

14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him up, because he hath known my Name.

Here God Himself begins to speak, and counts up the blessings He hath in store for His faithful servants who love Him. The love of God, says a holy servant of His, gives liberty, drives fear away, feels no toil, looks to no merit, asks for no reward, refreshes the weary, strengthens the weak, rejoices the sad, nourishes the hungry, makes the fainting cheerful. And such love has its recompense from Him, for He is not loved without reward, albeit He ought to be loved without looking for it, for true affection, though no hireling, can never go away empty-handed. And the reward here promised is deliverance, and that, as the lowest grade in an ascending scale, from temptations and sorrows here in earth, and from the tyrannous bondage of sin, because just as selfish desire chains us, so true love sets us free, and when our love is purest, and directed to the highest good, then we attain "the glorious liberty of the children of God." He does not stop short there, but sets on high (A. V.) out of the reach of enemies, so that no fresh captivity is possible to him that hath known His Name; that is, not its mere syllables, but its saving power, its wisdom, its loving-kindness, with close personal intimacy, knowing God as shepherd, friend, and Father; a knowledge whereof the Gospel speaks, "I S. John x. am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known

Idiota, Contemp. divin. Amoris, c. 1.

S. Bernard.  
Serm. in Cant. 79.

C.

Bellarmino.

Rom. viii.

21.

I S. John x.

14.



of Mine." That Name of JESUS was hallowed from all eternity, prefigured by them of old time, desired by the Prophets, foretold by the holy Fathers, named by GOD, announced by the Angel, declared by the Blessed Virgin, witnessed to by the Martyrs, praised by the Confessors, foretasted by the Virgins, exalted by all Saints.

S. Bonaventura, Comp. Theol. Verit. iv. 12.

Brev. Sarsb. The Sequence, *Jesus dulcis Nasarevus.*

If thou but think upon this Name,  
Warlike array is put to shame,  
And thou shalt conqueror be :  
Unto this Name be honour paid,  
Which evil spirits, sore afraid,  
Dread, and before it quail ;  
This is the Name which brings salvation,  
The only certain consolation  
To aid when sad hearts fail.

Hugo Card. And that we may be assured hereof, the LORD JESUS Himself, Who alone perfectly loveth and knoweth the FATHER, was delivered by Him from the power of the grave, and set up in the glory of the Resurrection.

15 He shall call upon me, and I will hear him :  
yea, I am with him in trouble ; I will deliver him,  
and bring him to honour.

S. Bernard. Serm. 18.

The fruit of the knowledge of GOD is a *call* in prayer, and the fruit of that call is that the SAVIOUR *will hear*. How could any be heard that did not call, or how could he call, if he knew not the Name of GOD? Thanks be to Him Who revealed the FATHER's Name to men, bestowing the fruit of salvation in the act of calling on Him, as it is written, "Who-soever shall call upon the Name of the LORD shall be delivered." *He shall call upon Me, and I will hear him.* This is the covenant of peace, this is the league of loving-kindness, this is the pact of mercy and compassion. GOD doth not say : He was worthy, righteous, and good, innocent of hand and pure of heart, and I will therefore deliver, protect, and hear him. Had He said this, or aught like it, who would not be afraid? O blessed law, which hath ordained that the mere cry of praying shall have the merit of being heard. And now let us see what are the results of this hearing on GOD's part, either as He heard His well-beloved SON, when "in the days of His flesh He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard," or as He hears us now when the first loud cry of the prayer that SON taught us, Our FATHER, pierces through the heavens and reaches His mercy-seat : *I am with him in trouble ; next, I will deliver him ; thirdly, I will bring him to honour.* These promises correspond to the history of those three most solemn days, Good Friday, when the LORD hung upon the Cross in grievous

Joel ii. 32.

Heb. v. 7.

S. Bernard.

Bellarmino.



trouble; Holy Saturday, when He rested peacefully, delivered out of all His pain; and Easter Day, when He arose in glorious honour and strength from the dead. These three days are types of the experience of His elect, in the brief sorrowful life of this world, in the middle state of expectation, in the resurrection of glory with CHRIST. Observe too, that while all the other verbs in these promises are future, one alone is the present tense, I *am* with him in trouble, teaching us at once that He makes no delay when we are in need, and also that our sorrow is so brief as to be merely passing and instantaneous, having no future. And how, asks S. Bernard, are we to know that He *is* with us in trouble? By the very fact that we are in trouble, for we could not bear it if He were not with us to be our stay and consolation. And therefore it is a very true sense of these words to see here, as some do, a promise of CHRIST's Incarnation, for "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." And then, as Thomas à Kempis beautifully says: "When any trouble comes upon thee, then CHRIST meets thee with His Cross, and shows thee the road to the kingdom of heaven, whither thou shouldest go." And it may be noted that GOD does not speak to Job till after all his sufferings, and then comes to him to speak familiarly as friend with friend. *I will deliver him* is not spoken now, as it was in the earlier verse, of mere temporal rescue, but of deliverance out of all the troubles of the world, and of salvation from the second death, even though the path of deliverance may be that of martyrdom, whereof one who attained the palm himself saith, "As ye do battle, and fight in the combat of faith, GOD Himself looks on, the Angels too, and CHRIST is a spectator also. What lofty glory, what happiness, to struggle in GOD's presence, and to be crowned by CHRIST as Judge!" Not martyrs alone, but all His servants, even the humblest and most obscure, brought by Him to honour as kings and priests, shining as the sun in the kingdom of the FATHER, and that for no brief time nor with any imperfect splendour, for the closing promises are—

S. Bernard.  
Serm. 16.

Galatnus.  
Heb. iv. 15.

Serm. 20,  
ad Novitios.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
in Ps. 66.

A.

S. Cypr. Ep.  
ad Thibarit.

Bellarmino.

16 With long life will I satisfy him : and show him my salvation.

That is, as even the Rabbins saw, with the unending days of eternity, with the full revelation of the face of CHRIST in glory, that Beatific Vision which is the everlasting gladness of ransomed souls. Show us then Thy salvation, O LORD, and it sufficeth us. For he who sees it, sees Thee, since it is in Thee and Thou in it, and this is life eternal, that we may know Thee the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST Whom Thou hast sent. Thou wilt therefore, O LORD, let Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, when mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, Thy JESUS, our LORD.

R. Kimchi.  
Genebrardus.

S. Bernard.  
Serm. 17.  
S. John  
xvii. 3.



Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, the Most High ; glory be to the SON, His salvation ; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the shadow of the Almighty.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

**Ludolph.** Grant us, O LORD, by invocation of Thy Name, to tread under foot the deadly poison of the asp and basilisk, that Thou mayest show us Thy salvation, and we be protected under the shadow of Thy shield against the snares of the spiritual enemy. (1.)

**D. C.** O God Most High, grant us, we beseech Thee, to dwell under Thy defence, and to abide in Thy protection, that Thy right hand may put away evil that it come not nigh us, and that the scourge of sin touch us not, but that at Thy command, we may be kept by the Angels in all our ways. (1.)

**Brev. Rom.** O God, Who in Thine unspeakable providence dost vouchsafe to send Thy holy Angels to be our guard, grant that we, Thy humble servants, may alway be defended by their aid and rejoice in their everlasting fellowship. (1.)

**Greek  
Horology,  
Compline.** O LORD, Who hast delivered us from every arrow that flieth by day, deliver us also from every thing that walketh in darkness ; vouchsafe also that we may pass the course of this night without sin or temptation of evil, and deliver us from all terror and dread which cometh to us from the devil. Through the mercy and compassion of Thine Only-begotten SON, with whom, &c.

### PSALM XCII.

**TITLE.** A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath Day. Chaldee Targum : A Praise and Song which the first man spake for the Sabbath Day.

#### ARGUMENT.

**ARG. THOMAS.** That CHRIST hath caused the conquerors to flourish as though with the gift of the heavenly palm. The Voice of the Church. The Voice of the Church to GOD concerning her enemies. The Doctrine of Confession, and concerning the glory of the righteous in the world to come.

**VEN. BEDE.** A Psalm denotes spiritual works, which tend upwards towards the LORD ; in these all ought always to sing, that is, give thanks to the LORD our Helper. The *Sabbath Day* is interpreted *Rest*, whereby we are warned to cease from every evil deed, and likewise to hope with most sure devotion for the *rest* to come. Arnobius saith thus : On the Sabbath Day the LORD's enemies perish, that on the Sunday the LORD's friends may be glad ; for on



the Sabbath Day the LORD lieth dead in the grave, and on the Sunday is worshipped living among the Angels. In this matter His thoughts are very deep, which an unwise man doth not well consider. At the first outset, the Church speaks, declaring that it is a good thing to utter praises to the LORD; which it asserts to be a thing whereof the unwise and ungodly are ignorant. *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord.* In the second part she asserts that sinners will perish quickly like the grass. *When the ungodly are green, &c.* Thirdly; she saith that the righteous flourish like a palm-tree, and spread abroad like a cedar in Libanus; to the end that fear may correct the obstinate, and the blessed promise sustain the devout. *The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree.*

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous; Concerning the ministry of the Priests, and their Morning Sacrifices. It also foretells rest in the LORD.

EUSEBIUS OF CESAREA. Concerning that rest which is according unto GOD.

## VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian.* Saturday: Lauds.

*Monastic.* Friday: Lauds. [Comm. of One Martyr: II. Nocturn.]

*Ambrosian.* Thursday of Second Week: I. Nocturn.

*Parisian.* Monday: Lauds.

*Lyons.* Saturday: Lauds.

*Quignon.* Thursday: Terce.

*Eastern Church.* Mesorion of Prime.

## ANTIPHONS.

It is a good thing \* to give thanks unto the LORD.

*Monastic.* [Comm. of One Martyr: The righteous shall flourish as a palm-tree, and spread abroad like a cedar in Libanus.]

1 It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD :  
and to sing praises unto thy Name, O most Highest ;

*A good thing* for these reasons : because it is just, and due from us to GOD our King ; it is useful, as being one of those works which are profitable to the soul ; it is delightful, for it is pleasant for one that loves, to praise the object of his affection ; it is ennobling, giving man a share in the office of the heavenly spirits. The LXX. and Vulgate, according to their wont, put the term *confess* instead of *give thanks*, and the commentators note that such confession, to be adequate, must be two-fold ; acknowledgment of our own weakness and guilt, as the first step, on the one hand, and of GOD's might and holiness on the other, after we have fitted ourselves, by this preliminary cleansing of the heart, to celebrate His praises. *Unto Thy Name.* They tell us that this title especially applies to CHRIST, the Only-Begotten SON, by Whom GOD is fully revealed to us, so that we know Him, while the name LORD denotes the HOLY SPIRIT, and *Most Highest* the FATHER Himself. The word here translated *sing* is by LXX.

Bellarmino.

C.

Z.

Honorius.



- C. and Vulgate rendered *play* (*ψάλλειν, psallere*), and is mystically explained as the activity of devotion in good works, whereby the notes of our souls, as of a psaltery when struck, ascend to the ears of God. And we may fitly apply here the old Leonine saw as to the recitation of the Divine office :

Bakius.

Rite canis horas, si Biblia evolvis et oras,  
Tuncque placent horæ, cum corde canuntur et ore.

Thou singest the Hours aright, if in Scripture and prayer thou  
delight,

The Hours are accepted when sung by the heart in accord with  
the tongue.

2 To tell of thy loving-kindness early in the morning : and of thy truth in the night-season.

Genebrardus.

Talmud.  
Kiddushin.

Numb.  
xxviii. 4, 7.

R. Shelomo.  
R. Ataia.

Hugo Card.

R.

A.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.

Ps. xviii.  
11.

There is a singular Rabbinical legend that this Psalm was the song of praise uttered by Adam as the first Sabbath dawned upon the world, and that it descended by tradition as the special hymn for that day. More consonant with actual history is the fact that it was sung in the Temple on the Sabbath at the offering of the first lamb in the morning, when the wine was poured out, and continues still in use as a Sabbathical psalm in the rites of the Synagogue, and that the Roman Church, amongst other tokens of the powerful Judaizing influence which affected its earliest days, retains it as part of the Saturday Lauds in the Breviary. Further, there is a distinct reference in this second verse to the morning and evening sacrifice ; while more than one Rabbi is careful to point out that the happy Sabbath of which the Psalmist sings is not one of the present time, but belongs to the future revelation of Messiah in His glory. Observe, then, how fitly it succeeds Psalm xci., wherein we hear of the victory over temptation, now followed by restful peace of mind, figured by the LORD's repose in the grave when He, as at the beginning of creation, rested from all His work that He had done ; and figuring in its turn the Sabbath of eternity. And as the clear *morning* denotes the sunshine of prosperity, we thank God, while it lasts, for His *mercy* and bountifulness towards us. But we do not on that account charge Him with harshness and cruelty when the *night-season* of adversity arrives ; rather we praise His *truth*, that is, the justice with which He weighs our faults and metes out His fatherly chastisements. And as the night always precedes the morning, so it is not till we have been tried by suffering and darkened by sin and trouble, that we thoroughly realize and can fittingly praise the mercy of God in that glad morning when the Sun of Righteousness begins to arise in our hearts. We tell of His truth in the *night-season*, because our eyes are unable to bear the dazzling glory of His full revelation, for it is written, "He made darkness His secret place." Therefore the Law



was given amidst clouds and darkness on Mount Sinai, therefore the Prophets spake in enigmas, therefore too the LORD Himself hid the mysteries of His kingdom in parables, therefore we too, here in the night-time of the world, "see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face;" then, in the morning of the everlasting Sabbath, when all secrets shall be revealed :

For when the Sole-Begotten  
 Shall render up once more  
 The kingdom to the FATHER,  
 Whose own it was before,—  
 Then glory yet unheard of  
 Shall shed abroad its ray,  
 Resolving all enigmas,  
 An endless Sabbath Day.

Bern.  
 Cluniac.  
 Rhythmus.

3 Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the lute : upon a loud instrument, and upon the harp.

There is some variation of opinion as to whether we have two, three, or four musical instruments named in this verse. The first is the view taken by the Syriac and Arabic versions, which make the lute to be the decachord, and the harp the mere accompaniment to a song. The second view is that of the Chaldee, LXX., Vulgate, and A. V. ; as well as of most modern critics, who are divided as to the precise mode of rendering the second clause, some taking it to be "a song to the harp," and others, "a loud (or a solemn) strain upon the harp" itself. The third opinion, which makes the word *Higgaion*, here occurring, that of a separate musical instrument, is supported by Aben-Ezra, and does, no doubt, preserve more fully the balance of parallelism in the two strophes of the verse. As to the mystical meaning of the *decachord*, it is only necessary to add a little to what has been already said under Psalm xxxiii. 2, namely, that one ancient Father tells us that it means the LORD JESUS Himself, seemingly because the initial letter of that holy Name stands for the number *ten* both in Hebrew and Greek, while, as the Latin X marks the Cross, and is also the Egyptian sign of life to come, it may well denote Him too. Nay more, our modern way of writing it, with the figure 1 followed by a cipher, itself nothing, tells of the One sole sufficient Godhead united by the Incarnation to the nothingness of man. Again, the decachord's ten strings denote the ten precepts of the moral law ; by compliance with which our lives make music to God, while they take the *song and harp* (Vulg.) to be the cheerful acceptance of bodily mortification, and the readiness of almsgiving. And that because, as was noted before, a mystical distinction is always drawn between the *psalter*, whose strings are struck from above, and which is therefore taken to denote divine contemplation, and the *harp*, played from below, and therefore typical

Hupfeld.  
 De Wette.

Rosenmüller.

S. Clem.  
 Alex. Pædag.  
 og. ii. 4.

L.

A.

Haymo.  
 S. Bruno  
 Carth.



- A. of humility, and the active service of the body. And S. Augustine here observes: Our business here is not merely to *carry* the psaltery but to *sing* to it. Even the Jews have the Law; they carry it, but they do not play upon it. Who then do play? They who put it into action. That is not enough. They who act with dejection are not yet playing. Who are they that play? They who do well with cheerfulness. For there is cheerfulness in playing. And what saith the Apostle? "God loveth a cheerful giver." And the same Apostle, in counting up the afflictions of mind and body which habitually befell himself in the course of his ministry, puts another decachord of suffering into our hands, wherewith we, by striking its strings boldly and cheerfully, can make melody well-pleasing to the LORD. For, as one has well said, God speaks to man, saying, Thou art My harp, and flute, and temple; a harp, by reason of harmony; a flute, because of breath; a temple, because of the Word.

2 Cor. ix. 7.  
Le Blanc.  
1 Cor. iv. 11.

S. Clem.  
Alex.  
Admon. ad  
Gent.

4 For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy works : and I will rejoice in giving praise for the operations of thy hands.

5 O LORD, how glorious are thy works : thy thoughts are very deep !

These verses appear to have suggested the Rabbinical legend already cited; that this was Adam's morning hymn on the day after his creation. And we may observe that the phrase in the first verse does not run, *Thy works have made me glad*, for if there be no more than that, then the beauties and marvels of creation are snares to draw us from the thought of God. But here it runs *Thou hast made me glad*, and that *through Thy works* as an instrument to declare Thy love and power. And thus our own poet, in the hymn he puts into Adam's mouth in Eden :

Milton,  
*Paradise  
Lost*, v. 153.

These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good,  
Almighty, Thine this universal frame,  
Thus wondrous fair; Thyself how wondrous then !  
Unspeakable, Who sittest above these heavens,  
To us invisible, or dimly seen  
In these Thy lowest works, yet these declare  
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.

- Rom. i. 20. And that because, as the Apostle says, "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." Wherefore S. Basil the Great aptly calls creation the "school and lecture-room of souls." But there are some marvels which lessen by experience and knowledge, and therefore the Psalmist adds here that such is not the case with God's works, because their wonderful character, in greatest and least alike, and the whole mystery of crea-

Hom. 1, in  
Hexaem.  
Bellarmine.



tion is *very deep*, lying far below the longest plummet with which man would fain sound the abysses. But if the creation of nature be wonderful, far exceeding it in beauty and marvels is the creation of grace; and they tell us truly that the way God made us most glad *through the work of His hands* was when He stretched forth those hands upon the Cross, there to work out our redemption, when *His thoughts were very deep*, looking forward to the whole constitution and history of His Church, and the coming of the nations into the fold.

6 An unwise man doth not well consider this :  
and a fool doth not understand it.

They give several explanations of the distinction between S. Bruno the two classes of persons here named, some telling us that the first denotes unbelievers, who know nothing of the wisdom of God, and the second evil Christians, who, knowing the outer facts of His truth, are unable to comprehend them by reason of perversity. Others see, not dissimilarly, the man who is incurious of heavenly things, and him who is eager about earthly matters. Or again, the Jew who rejects, and the Gentile who has never learnt the Gospel. Once more, it is explained to denote the man endowed with worldly wisdom, but who is destitute of spiritual knowledge, and the man who has neither wisdom of this world nor of the next. But the most satisfactory account seems to be that by the first are meant simply those who are deficient in understanding, and dull in observation, as a mere mental deficiency; and by the second those who have blunted all their powers by perversity and wickedness. And we may draw one lesson from this verse, that the so-called "sacrifice of intellect" is not an oblation well-pleasing to God, for it stunts our faculty of admiration for His glory, and folds in a napkin of specious purity of intention the talent He gives us to put out at interest for Him. Wherefore Lactantius says very well: "Religion cannot be separated from Wisdom, nor Wisdom from Religion, for it is one and the same God Who ought to be understood, which is Wisdom, and honoured, which is Religion."

7 When the ungodly are green as the grass, and when all the workers of wickedness do flourish: then shall they be destroyed for ever; but thou, LORD, art the most Highest for evermore.

8 For lo, thine enemies, O LORD, lo, thine enemies shall perish: and all the workers of wickedness shall be destroyed.

This is one of the deep thoughts of God which are not Agellius.



Ay.

C.

D. C.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.  
R.

Hugo Card.

Targum.

C.  
Haymo.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.

Dorotheus  
Abbas.

considered nor understood by the unwise and foolish, namely, that there is no Sabbath rest of mind or of future happiness awaiting the wicked. It is the consolation given to the servants of God, that their enemies, who are His enemies too, will fade and disappear in the very moment of their apparent strength and triumph; while He, Who is His people's stay, is untouched by any change, is not as the *grass* of the field, lying low or rank, but *Most Highest*, is not one that can perish, but is *for evermore*. And thus, though His enemies counted Him a mere man, who could be slain, and His memory blotted out, yet His very death itself was the overthrow of both His ghostly and human foes. They give several explanations of the repetition of the words *Thine enemies*; for the most part taking it as denoting some special emphasis, either as increasing the terror of the threat, or fixing the certainty of retribution; but others prefer to see a reference to the great variety of sinners, and one will have it that two classes of offenders are here distinguished, those who break the positive law, specially enjoined by God, and those who transgress the natural law, familiar even to heathens. *Shall be destroyed*. Rather, with LXX., Vulgate, and A.V., *scattered*. And so the Chaldee takes it, *shall be separated from the congregation of the righteous*; a meaning which most of the Christian expositors transfer to the division between the sheep and goats at the Day of Judgment. There is, however, a gentler reading of the verses, which deserves citation. The sinners, observes a Greek Father, who spring up like the grass, are impure thoughts, for grass is a weak and frail thing, possessing no vigour. When the evil thoughts arise in the mind, then all the workers of wickedness *appear* (LXX.) which mean actual sins, that they may *perish for ever*. For when sins appear before warriors and athletes, they are at once slain by them. Note then the order of the language; first evil thoughts spring up; then sins appear, thereupon all of them perish. All this has to do with athletes. We, who carry sin into action, and always fulfil our vices, are unable to know when bad thoughts spring up, or when sins appear, but we are still in Lower Egypt, making bricks under Pharaoh.

9 But mine horn shall be exalted like the horn of an unicorn : for I am anointed with fresh oil.

L.

Z.

Whether CHRIST be here the speaker, or one of His members, the *horn* is the same, that mighty horn of salvation raised up in the House of David, the LORD strong in His own power, or His disciple strong in His co-operation. He is a *horn*, for springing from flesh, He hath nothing of the passions of flesh, but grows out beyond the carnal nature from which He derives Himself, and rises up on high, in strength and honour, a terror to all His foes, specially in the



Judgment. He is *anointed with fresh oil*, not with that old traditional oil of the decrepit Mosaic dispensation, wherewith the Aaronic Priesthood was set apart, wherewith in former days kings and prophets had been consecrated. His unction was *fresh*, a new thing in creation, the direct anointing of the HOLY GHOST Himself, of which that elder rite was but a faint symbol, *fresh*, as knowing no corruption, as ever new and young, though eternal before and after all worlds; a new anointing which He sent on the Apostles in the fiery tongues of Pentecost. *Of an unicorn*.<sup>1</sup> Those who take this whole speech to be that of the Church, see here in the unicorn the type of Catholic unity, or as the Greek Fathers take it, the worship of One God; while a third view is that the singleness of future glory, in which no foreign elements can mingle, is denoted; and a fourth sees here those who rejoice in the one hope of reaching that one glory.

In the latter strophe of the verse, the LXX. and Vulgate read, *And my old age in rich mercy*.<sup>2</sup> And this they take of the old age of the Church, in the late evening of the world, when her beauty will be as snowy as the hair of an aged man: or again, of the future life itself, an old age in the sense of its late arrival and its tranquillity, although in itself a perpetual youth; or yet again, the gravity and calmness of life and demeanour to be observed in Saints, even in their early years, all which are blessed with the rich mercy of God. And the Carmelite, citing Aristotle, urges that there are five good qualities of old men which make them apt types of the Church in the time of wisdom, as of individual Saints also; namely, that their passions have cooled, they have more pity for suffering than the young, they are not given to such strong assertion of doubtful matters, and they are discreet and temperate in action.

10 Mine eye also shall see his lust of mine enemies: and mine ear shall hear his desire of the wicked that rise up against me.

They take it in a threefold sense, first, of the victory of the Church, by no physical act of her own, over the Jews and the Pagans who oppressed her in the earliest days of Christianity; next, of the inner eye of the soul beholding the victory of faith over temptation; and lastly, of the final overthrow of sinners in the Judgment.

<sup>1</sup> This rendering follows the LXX. *μονοκέρας*. But there is nothing to suggest the idea of one horn in the Hebrew *עֶרְוָה*, which is probably the now extinct *Aurochs*, *urus*, or wild bull.

<sup>2</sup> Deriving *ἡλικία* from *ἡλξ*, (whence *ἡλικία* *old*) instead of from *ἡλξ*, and misreading *ἐλάφ* for *ἐλάφ*.

A.

C.

S. Basil. M.  
Theodoret.  
Jansen.  
Gand.

R.

A.

C.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

Ay.

P.

D. C.



11 The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree :  
and shall spread abroad like a cedar in Libanus.

Le Blanc,  
&c.

Here is the forcible contrast to the lowly and fading grass of a previous verse, taken from the stateliest and most valuable trees of Palestine. There are many reasons given for the comparison of a Saint to a *palm-tree*, which have no lack of aptness. The palm grows in a barren soil, as the Saint in this world's desert, and yet needs constant moisture, as he needs the fountains of the Word. It grows to a great height, and perfectly straight, denoting aspiration to heavenly things and uprightness of life; it grows as long as it lives, is an evergreen, and always fruitful, denoting spiritual improvement and continuous vitality of holiness; its leaves spread out above as high as possible from the ground, and its fruit is amongst those leaves, denoting loftiness of aim and action; it is slender and without bark, denoting the absence of all grossness of habit, or superfluity of possessions; it has wonderful elasticity of fibre, rising up from under heavy weights, a type of that buoyancy of confidence in God which makes His Saints cheerfully cast off troubles, and every part of it is good for some purpose, showing that in a holy life no faculty, talent, or opportunity is suffered to go to waste; and in its symbolical use, both amongst Jews and Pagans, because it never bends before the storm, it is the emblem of victory. The *cedar*, again, in its mountainous abode, in its vast spreading bulk and majesty, in its deep roots, its sweet perfume, its incorruptible wood, and its great longevity, serves as a type of other endowments of the Saints. They are cedars of *Libanus*, the "white" mountain, because washed clean from their sins in the waters of Baptism, and the precious Blood of CHRIST, and they also denote the Gentile Martyrs, because Lebanon was outside the actual limits of the Holy Land.

Bakius.

Hugo Card.  
Anon. Græc.  
ap.

Cd.

12 Such as are planted in the house of the LORD :  
shall flourish in the courts of the house of our  
God.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.

Bellarmino.  
1 Cor. iii. 6.  
S. Matt. xv.  
13.

As the cedar and palm both played their part in Solomon's temple, the one in actual timbers and beams, the other carved everywhere as an ornament; so the Saints of God, likened to these trees, can flourish only when planted within His Church, not merely inside its visible limits, but rooted in its doctrine. They have been transplanted thither out of Jewish unbelief, out of Gentile idolatry, out of worldly carelessness, by the agency of God's servants, for it is written, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God giveth the increase." Only there, and only so, can they *flourish*, for it is written, "Every plant which My Heavenly FATHER hath not planted



shall be rooted up." We may take this *house* and *courts* of *the Lord* to be either the Church Militant, especially in the Religious Life, or the Church Triumphant after the Resurrection, in both of which the righteous flourish, though in different fashion. And one who prefers the former interpretation remarks that the *courts* are in front of the house, and outside it, and that they denote in this place renunciation of secular things, so that he who gives up the world, plants his palm in the courts of God's house. It is curious to find it said that they who are planted in the *house* shall flourish in the *courts*; but it is well answered that the righteous are planted by their inner faith in heaven itself, while the outward token of that holy rooting in love is visible in the Church below by their good works and devout conversation, or, as another tells us, their own hearts are those outer courts of God's house which are blooming with the trees and flowers of His inner dwelling. This verse is in use as a *Y.* and *R.* in the Breviary Office for Martyrs.

Hugo Card.  
S. Alb. Mag.

Hugo Viet.

Ay.

D. C.

Brev. Rom.

13 They also shall bring forth more fruit in their age : and shall be fat and well-liking.

Here reference is made to that distinguishing property of the palm-tree, already mentioned, that it never ceases to bear fruit, however old it may be, till its actual death, nay, that its produce is more abundant in its latter years; while the cedar, though not a fruit-bearing tree, continues to spread in bulk and foliage to a vast age, thus signifying the undying vitality and productiveness of the Church Universal and of the holy soul to the end of their earthly time. And so the Wise Man, after telling us how "the multiplying brood of the ungodly shall not thrive, nor take deep rooting," adds that "honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that which is measured by number of years; but wisdom is the grey hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age." The Vulgate reading in the latter clause is, *They shall be right patient*; that is, not merely holding out sternly against suffering, as criminals often do when being punished, but with that patience which is born of love and faith, the endurance of the Martyrs; *right* patient, because while they preach of heavenly things they bear adversity bravely and cheerfully, that by such endurance they may obtain yet more blessings for their souls. And this notion brings us back to the *well-liking* of our version, for Tertullian says of patience, that it is "beautiful in every sex and every age."

Agellius.

D. C.

Wisd. iv.  
3, 8.

B.

Ay.

S. Greg. M.  
Mor. xxxv.  
16.Tertull.  
de Patient.

14 That they may show how true the LORD my strength is : and that there is no unrighteousness in him.



- Honorius. That is, that here in all troubles, and especially when the persecution of Antichrist falls upon the Church, they may continue steadfastly to profess their unshaken faith in the justice and promises of God, their belief that He causes them to suffer only that patience may bring forth her perfect work, and increase the glory of that crown which He, the righteous Judge, our firm *Rock*, (A. V.,) hath promised to bestow upon them, when He brings them into the Sabbath which remaineth for the people of God.
- S. Bruno  
Carth.  
Z.  
Heb. iv. 9.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, the Most Highest ; glory be to the SON, the LORD our Rock ; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the fresh Anointing of the LORD.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

- Ludolph. O God, the eternal rejoicing of the Saints, Who makest the righteous, strengthened with divers gifts of good things, to flourish unfadingly in the palm-bearing courts ; we beseech Thee, that putting away the weight of our sins, Thou mayest vouchsafe to bestow upon us fellowship with them. (1.)
- Mozarabic. It is a good thing for us to give thanks unto Thee, O LORD : and to sing unto Thy most high Name ; that our confession may deliver us from peril, and our zeal in singing make us more acceptable in Thy sight. (11.)
- Mozarabic,  
for SS. Ju-  
lian, &c.,  
MM.  
Thy Saints, O LORD, flourish as a palm-tree in Thy sight, and stand planted and rooted in Thy holy courts, who, when set in the conflict of martyrdom, won from their torture the palm of victory, and for death everlasting glory in Thine house. We therefore beseech Thee, O glorious God, that for their great merits Thou mayest grant us pardon for the wickedness of our sins. (11.)
- Pseudo-  
Hieron. We beseech Thee, O LORD, that we may fulfil in deed that which we have heard, and turn our words into works, that we who are planted here in Thy house may flourish in the court of CHRIST. (5.)
- D. C. Plant us in Thine house, O LORD, with virtues, and make us as good seed bear fruit in all loveliness of religion, that growing up like a palm-tree in the flower of righteousness, and perfected therein by Thee, we may flourish in joy in Thy sight for evermore. (1.)



## PSALM XCIII.

**TITLE.** LXX. and Vulgate : A Praise of a Song for David himself, on the day before the Sabbath, when the earth was inhabited, (LXX.) or established (Vulg.) Syriac Psalter : Of David, concerning the ministry of the LORD. Arabic Psalter : Of David, who spake it for a praise on the Sabbath-day, when the earth rested.<sup>1</sup>

## ARGUMENT.

**ARG. THOMAS.** That CHRIST, having overcome death, put on the glory of the Resurrection. The Voice of the Church concerning the Kingdom of CHRIST. Of the Nativity of CHRIST, and His first Advent. Concerning belief.

**VEN. BEDÆ.** A Song in praise of the Godhead ; *For David* is suitably applied to CHRIST. The question is raised how he can say that the *earth was established on the day before the Sabbath*, that is, on the sixth day of the week, seeing that we read in Genesis that the dry land appeared on the third day ; but here we must understand *earth* to be man, to whom is said, *Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt go.* And as he was made on the sixth day by GOD the Creator, so too in the sixth age of the world he was established from the seed of David by the same GOD the Creator, for then was the earth established, when belief in Him was confirmed for mankind. And therefore the *Praise* is of His holy Incarnation, which is sung in the course of this Psalm.

The first passage describes His beauty, *The Lord is King, &c.* Then His strength, *The Lord is clothed with strength.* Thirdly, His works, *He hath made the round world, &c.* Fourthly, His might, *Thy seat hath been prepared.* Fifthly, the praises of the universe, *The floods have lift up.* Sixthly, His truth, *Thy testimonies.* Lastly, the praise of His house, which it befits to rejoice with everlasting gladness. Some copies have *On the day before the Sabbath, when the earth was inhabited*, which seems to agree better with the history, because the *earth was established* before, but on the sixth day of the week it was perfected by the flocks of animals and the indwelling of man himself ; and on this day also the LORD restored man by the wood of the Cross to Paradise, where He had put him at the beginning, *To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.*

**EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA.** A Hymn of the Kingdom of CHRIST, touching His first Advent.

<sup>1</sup> This is still a Friday Psalm in the Jewish use, whence it seems that the titles here and elsewhere found in the LXX. but not in the Hebrew, were

added for ritual purposes by the Alexandrian Jews, whose use differed in some respects from that of Jerusalem.



## VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian.* Sunday and all Festivals : Lauds. [Septuagesima to Easter Sunday : Prime.]

*Monastic.* Ferial. Friday : I. Nocturn. [Easter-tide, and all festivals of Saints, Sunday : Lauds.]

*Ambrosian.* Thursday of Second Week : I. Nocturn. [Easter Eve : Matins.]

*Parisian.* Thursday : Nones.

*Lyons.* Sunday : Lauds.

*Quignon.* Thursday : Terce.

*Eastern Church.* Mesorian of Prime.

## ANTIPHONS.

*Monastic.* Arise, \* Thou Judge of the world.

*Ambrosian.* Ferial. As preceding Psalm. [Easter Eve : They set up\* over His head His accusation written, JESUS of Nazareth, King of the Jews.]

*Lyons.* Holiness becometh Thine house for ever.

*Mozarabic.* Wonderful are the liftings up of the sea, \* wonderful in the heights is the LORD.

1 The LORD is King, and hath put on glorious apparel : the LORD hath put on his apparel, and girded himself with strength.

Agellius.

The Psalmist, as with a herald's voice, proclaims publicly to all men that the LORD hath taken the insignia of a *King*, and after defeating in battle and casting out the prince of this world, hath reduced under His sway the kingdom which was always His possession. And so, under the type of a king, who assumes the royal insignia on the day of his proclamation, he declares that the LORD is clad in *glorious apparel*, as though adorned with kingly vestments. He styles His achievements and triumphant victory as glorious apparel, wherewith He is so adorned as a conquering king is wont to be decked in the robes of triumph. Or He is equipped with glittering and dazzling arms for the overthrow of His enemies, which view the next phrase confirms, *He is clothed with strength* (A.V., Vulg.) for the arms He puts on are not merely splendid, but strong. Finally, He hath girded Himself, to wit, with baldric and sword, to do battle with the foe. This apparel may perhaps apply better to His Resurrection, when, laying aside the garb of mortality, He was clad in the raiment of immortality, glorious at once and strong ; glorious in kingly majesty, strong for joining battle against the enemy. Epiphanius refers the *glorious* apparel to the Incarnation, that of *strength* to the Resurrection. When He came on earth, some heard Him gladly ; and to them He appeared in His beauty, while others reviled and slandered Him, for whose punishment He clothed Himself with His might. It is so still, wherever His Gospel is preached, ac-

A.



cording as men accept or reject it, for it is written, "We are <sup>2 Cor. ii. 15.</sup>  
 unto God a sweet savour of CHRIST, in them that are saved, C.  
 and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of  
 death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto  
 life." The LORD showed His might, when at His word "I S. John  
 am," His enemies "went backward and fell to the ground," xviii. 6.  
 He *girded* Himself, in the might of that humility wherewith A.  
 He overthrew the pride of Satan, when He stooped to wash  
 the feet of His disciples. He clothed Himself with beauty  
 and strength in the holiness and boldness of those Saints  
 whom He joined to Himself, especially His Apostles, when S. Bruno  
 He girded Himself to the task of establishing His kingdom Carth.  
 on earth. These were His royal purple, dyed in His own Haymo.  
 Blood as He was lifted, King, on His throne the Cross, and Honorius.  
 the valour of His Martyrs was the strength that compassed  
 Him about. And as He was King from all eternity, beauti-  
 ful and glorious in His Godhead, it is clear that we must  
 interpret this beginning of His kingdom, this new clothing of  
 His Person, of the Incarnation. And that Body which He  
 assumed is called *beauty εὐπρέπεια*, (*decorem*), because of its  
 showing us His image, because of its sinlessness, and because Anon. Græc.  
 of the loving-kindness towards us testified in the mystery. apud  
 Wherefore it is said of Him, "Thou art fairer than the chil- Cd.  
 dren of men;" and of His girding Himself, that "righteous- Ps. xiv. 3.  
 ness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the Isa. xi. 5.  
 girdle of His reins." This is the girdle wherewith He com- Titelman.  
 plies with that invocation, "Gird Thee with Thy sword upon A.  
 Thy thigh, O Thou most mighty," as He goes armed with the Ps. xlv. 4.  
 Spirit of God to receive for Himself the Kingdom according  
 to His own saying, "All power is given unto Me in heaven S. Matt.  
 and in earth;" so that beginning from His hidden throne in xxviii. 18.  
 the hearts of His elect, He spreads His empire by the voice D. C.  
 of His preachers over the whole earth and amongst all na-  
 tions.

2 He hath made the round world so sure : that it cannot be moved.

That round world, which aforetime was shaken under the Origen.  
 rule of its prince, and was at strife through the warring  
 opposition of divers opinions, and tossed about with the wor-  
 ship of numerous and unlike divinities, was *made sure* by the  
 LORD when He became King, so that it cannot be moved, Agellius.  
 because it has now been given the steadfastness of truth, as  
 worship is paid to the true God. Just so, the proclamation  
 of a new king, whose title and power are unimpeachable,  
 allays the strife of factions, contending before each for its  
 own candidate, and joy spreads amongst the people, knowing  
 that peace and justice will return. This kingdom *cannot be*  
*moved*, for it is founded on the Rock eternal, upon CHRIST D. C.  
 Himself, Who stablishes His chosen in faith, so perfectly



that they cannot be shaken by any temptations or fears so as to fall from Him by violence from without.

3 Ever since the world began hath thy seat been prepared : thou art from everlasting.

Agellius.

S. Bonaven-  
ture.

D. C.

Isa. lxi. 1.

Ay.

Bellarmino.

Hence there is not that peril with CHRIST the King which besets other new monarchs as they begin their reign ; the danger of inexperience in governing. His throne is from everlasting, and all the hoarded wisdom of eternity is His very own. His *seat* is fivefold, that of His divine throne, co-equal with the FATHER, for "thus saith the LORD, The Heaven is My throne, and the earth My footstool;" that hallowed resting-place of His in the pure womb of Blessed Mary ; that of His Cross ; the believing heart of any of His faithful disciples, or, indeed the aggregate of all such hearts, making up the Holy Catholic Church ; and the judicial seat allotted to Him, as Man, on the right hand of the FATHER. These latter thrones were prepared and predestined for Him *since the world began*, since the creation and fall of man necessitated His coming in flesh ; but He does not Himself begin then, for He, co-eternal and consubstantial with the FATHER, is *from everlasting*, is, not with the mere fact of existence, but with that plenitude of Being which is the life of all created things.

4 The floods are risen, O LORD, the floods have lift up their voice : the floods lift up their waves.

5 The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly : but yet the LORD, who dwelleth on high, is mightier.

L.  
Titelman.

A.  
Ps. xli. 4.

Herein we have set before us the roar and tumult of Jews and Pagans against the new Kingdom of CHRIST, and the climax of the triple repetition in the fourth verse denotes the gathering force of the deluge ; first, the angry commotion ; then the loud accusations ; lastly, the wild tumult ; all too weak to resist the eye and voice of Him Who rebuketh the winds and waves, saying, "Peace, be still." But the *floods* of the fourth verse are *rivers*, as rightly translated by LXX. and Vulgate, whereas those of the fifth verse are *waves of the sea*, and therefore more than one commentator has seen here a rivalry and opposition between the sweet waters of the one and the salt billows of the other. They will have it that the rivers flow from the well-head of living waters, that they are the rivers of that flood which makes glad the City of God, swollen by the descending rain of Pentecost, the Apostles themselves, lifting up their *voice*, the *voice of many waters* (LXX., Vulg.) in the speech of many a land, to proclaim that the LORD is King, lifting up their *waves* to sweep away



every barrier to the triumphant advance of the Gospel waters. Against them rise up in resistance the *waves of the sea*, trying to beat back the flood of sweet waters poured into their salt bosom, but vainly, for *wonderful* as are the *liftings-up* (LXX., Vulg.) of that wild sea of human rage, more wonderful still *in the highest* is the LORD Who is throned over all, and, through His mercy, those liftings-up of the very waves became wonderful in grace, by His conversion of the raging heathen into meek disciples of the Lamb, lifting them up to the very heavens, and that *from the voices of many waters*, the vows made to Him from the baptismal founts of countless churches in divers nations of the earth.

C.

Z.

6 Thy testimonies, O LORD, are very sure : holiness becometh thine house for ever.

Whatever the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, the words of the Evangelists, the teachings of the Apostles, the articles of the Creeds, allege concerning CHRIST the LORD, belonging as they do to faith, though incapable of proof by natural reason, as dealing with things hoped for and unseen, are proved by the marvellous works of the LORD Himself, and yet more by His patient life and painful death. His predictions, too, are fulfilled, telling His disciples that they should have tribulations in this world, and therefore they look for the accomplishment of the remainder of His prophecy, the victory and peace which He promises them in Himself. And because this is so, because His testimonies are true, *holiness becometh His house*, that is, it is the fit and peculiar attribute of that sacred shrine of His most pure Body, wherein the Godhead tabernacled; it is the fit adornment of that Virgin Mother within whom He vouchsafed to dwell; it is the peculiar and distinguishing mark of His Church; it is the token of His true followers, who bear in mind the Apostle's saying, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" And that no mere passing holiness, no temporary consecration, such as Shiloh, and Gibeon, and Sion had for a time, but that which is *for ever*, hallowed by the perpetual abiding Presence of God in Beatific Vision.

D. C.

Honorius.

The Gloss.

Agellius.

S. Athanasius.

Cd.

1 Cor. iii. 16.

The LORD, then, is King, for He assumed His Kingdom on the Cross; He put on glorious apparel in His Resurrection; He clothed weakness with strength, and girded Himself with eternity, and made the world sure in His Resurrection. And having His seat prepared, He ascended to the right hand of the FATHER in heaven. The floods of the Scriptures preached Him, and lifted up their voices for Him against the voice of many waters; more mightily, that is, than the gainsaying Gentiles. And thus CHRIST was made wonderful to the liftings-up of the sea, that is, to the kings and mighty men of this world; and not to them only, but

Arnobius.



wonderful in the highest, ascending the heavens as LORD, for then the testimonies of GOD were made very easy of belief, when He gave power of working cures upon mankind. And now that House of His which the Pharisees declared could not receive the holy precepts, hath accepted the Old Testament with its laws. Therefore now the Holy of holies befits it, that it may dwell there for evermore.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is from everlasting ; glory be to the SON, the King Who hath girded Himself with strength ; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who is the holiness of the house of GOD.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

Ludolph. O LORD Almighty, Who, girt with the FATHER's power, hast set heaven, sea, and earth in their places ; hearken unto Thy humble servants, grant us belief in Thy testimonies, and clothe us with strength and beautiful holiness. (1.)

Mozarabic. Cause us, O LORD, to become heirs of Thy testimonies, which have been made matter of belief unto us, let them be constantly in our thought, that they may be sincerely held in true faith, and be so fulfilled in our work, that as they are uttered by the mouth they may guide us in sorrow with their comfort and make us more ready to labour with Thee. (11.)

Mozarabic. Thy testimonies are wonderful, O LORD GOD, wherewith Thine Only-begotten SON is King over all the earth ; grant us, therefore, that we who behold His glory with unveiled face, may be set at His right hand in the judgment. (11.)

Mozarabic. O GOD, Who art clothed with strength, and girt with power, make us ready to stand before the seat of Thy majesty, that thenceforth and from everlasting we may magnify Thy Name, and vouchsafe to be gracious to us upon earth, Thou Who art wonderful in the highest. (11.)

Mozarabic. O LORD, Whose kingdom is terrible in might, and girded about with power, Whom the floods of the Doctors praise with lifted voices, and the wonders of the sea celebrate ; stir up Thy power, and the terrible strength of Thine arm, to break the yoke of our slavery, which presses sorely upon our necks. Let it confirm our weary hands, strengthen our feeble knees, make the faint-hearted become valiant, that we fear nothing henceforth from the enemy, because we believe Thee, our most loving Redeemer, to have come for our salvation. (11.)

D. C. O LORD, Ruler of heaven and earth, clothe us with the beauty of good works, and the strength of Thy grace, and gird us with the testimony of truth ; grant that we may go forth to meet Thee, clad in these clean wedding garments, and enter in with ready lamps unto the eternal marriage banquet with Thee. Who livest.



## PSALM XCIV.

**TITLE.** LXX. and Vulgate: A Psalm of David, for the fourth of the Sabbath.

**ARGUMENT.**

**ARG. THOMAS.** That CHRIST, distinguishing His human members, teaches and instructs man in knowledge. The Voice of the Church to the LORD. The Voice of the Apostles and of the whole Church to GOD concerning the Jews and all persecutors. The Voice of the Church to CHRIST concerning persecutions.

**VEN. BEDE.** The *fourth of the Sabbath* is the fourth day of the week counting from the Sabbath, that day on which the LORD created the lights of heaven. This is to be applied to holy men shining with heavenly conversation on earth, concerning whom the Psalm is about to speak.

The Prophet, observing the hearts of the unwise to be disturbed, as though GOD paid no attention to mortal affairs, when they saw the ungodly in prosperity and the righteous afflicted; asks in the first part the LORD to requite the proud, through whom he knew that the world had been perverted to such a notion. *O Lord God, to Whom vengeance belongeth.* In the second part, he rebukes those who in their foolish blasphemy think that GOD does not behold human things, whereas it is He who gives sense and understanding to His creatures; and he counts him blessed who treads under foot worldly happiness and perseveres in reverence for GOD. *Take heed, ye unwise.* In the third part, in order to attract their minds, he declares that the LORD hath been his own refuge, and will be the punisher of sinners. *Who will rise up with me against the wicked?*

**SYRIAC PSALTER.** Of David, concerning the congregation of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Spiritually, it is of the persecutions against the Church.

**EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA.** Concerning the persecutions against the Church.

**VARIOUS USES.**

*Gregorian.* Friday: Matins. [Precious Blood: III. Nocturn.]

*Monastic.* Friday: Matins.

*Ambrosian.* Thursday of Second Week: I. Nocturn. [Easter Eve: Matins.]

*Parisian.* Wednesday: Nones. [Easter Eve: III. Nocturn.]

*Lyons.* Thursday: Nones.

*Quignou.* Wednesday: Nones.

**ANTIPHONS.**

*Gregorian.* Ferial: Blessed\* be the LORD for evermore. [Precious Blood: When they saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith there came out blood and water.]



*Monastic.* As preceding Psalm.

*Ambrosian.* Ferial: As Psalm xcii. [Easter Eve: They that hate Me shall flee far from Me, they are not ashamed to spit in My face. \* They wounded the sinews of My feet, and marked out My path.]

*Parisian.* [Easter Eve: If the LORD had not helped me, my soul would have almost dwelt in hell.]

*Mozarabic.* The LORD will not fail His people, \* neither will He forsake His inheritance.

1 O LORD GOD, to whom vengeance belongeth :  
thou GOD, to whom vengeance belongeth, show  
thyself.

2 Arise, thou Judge of the world : and reward  
the proud after their deserving.

- Ay. This title of the Almighty, as *God of vengeance*, serves to correct the error that GOD deals with the universe only mediately, having laid down at the creation certain invariable laws for the government of the universe, and having then, so to speak, withdrawn Himself from His work, and allowed it to go on without Him. Here, on the contrary, it is plainly taught that He rules this lower world specially and directly, and is cognizant of and interested in all the dealings, good and bad, of mankind. The prayer here is that He may *shine forth* (A.V. marg.), and no longer hide His avenging justice in the thick darkness, but display it openly, and irresistibly. But the LXX. and Vulgate treat the first and second verses differently, taking the former in the past tense, and translating, instead of *show Thyself*, either *hath spoken boldly* (*επαφρονισατο*) or *hath dealt freely* (*libere egit*).<sup>1</sup> And this is true of Him, because He is not like mortal judges, who often have not the power to take vengeance on an offender, either because they are deterred through fear of consequences, or through hope of favour; or else because their jurisdiction is checked and limited by superior authority, whereas no such restrictions can bind the Most High. *Arise, Thou Judge of the world.* This title is the especial one of the LORD JESUS, because "the FATHER hath committed all judgment unto the Son," and He is therefore besought to *exalt* Himself, (LXX., Vulg., A.V.) either by ascending His Cross, whereupon He triumphs over the *proud* enemies of our souls; or by the glories of His Resurrection and Ascension, whereby He is throned at the right hand of the FATHER. The notion of the Cross being the judicial seat of CHRIST is one which often reappears, as for example in the hymn of the Paris Breviary :

Genebrardus.

Titelman.

S. John v. 22.

Anon. Græc.

Cd.

A.

<sup>1</sup> *επαφρονισατο* is an irregular form of *επαφρονισω* or *επαφρονισω*; so that the LXX. and Vulg. may very possibly be right in taking it as preterite.



Holy Cross, thou seat of judgment,  
Where the Just One sat enthroned,  
To pronounce the righteous sentence,  
Yet His righteous ire disowned,  
When He bare the wood of healing  
Who the rod of vengeance owned.

Sant. Victor.  
The Hymn,  
*Uncta Dei  
crucis cruce.*

But in whatever sense we take the seat, the word *exalt* will have the same spiritual force: for it is a call on the LORD to manifest Himself clearly, because He, as so great a Judge, ought to excel all other judges in righteousness as much as He does in power and dignity, and should therefore lift Himself up as though on a watch-tower, or some other lofty place, in order to behold all things which He is about to try, and not lower Himself to the level of what He condemns. Further, in calling Him *God of vengeance*, we confess that the right of avenging ourselves is not lodged in our hands, and abdicate thereby all claim to exercise it, contenting ourselves with returning good for evil. And He is GOD of *vengeances* (Heb., LXX., Vulg.) in the plural, because His chastisements are not single, but manifold, for He punishes the criminal in his own person and in that of others, in body and soul, in this life and the next. And this especially in the case of those who are *earth*, men of carnal desires and earthly wisdom, who have no savour of heavenly things. *Reward the proud.* It is spoken in threefold fashion, of Satan and his angels who fell by pride, of the Jews who crucified the LORD, because He foretold their humiliation, of false Christians who harden themselves and will not repent. And pride is the special sin against which GOD exercises His judgments, because it is loftiest in its origin as a spiritual fault, as it began amongst the Angels of heaven, and is still the besetting sin of lofty minds; because it is the most vigorous of sins, in that it spares no person, time, nor place; and the most crafty, because it can disguise itself, unlike almost every other temptation, in the garb of a virtue.

L.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.

Hugo Card.

L.

Ay.

3 LORD, how long shall the ungodly : how long shall the ungodly triumph?

4 How long shall all wicked doers speak so disdainfully : and make such proud boasting?

The *ungodly* are twice named, not merely by way of emphasis, but as marking their twofold offence, against the GOD Whose laws they despise and break, and the men whom they oppress and injure in so doing; and we may also take the words as denoting the two great classes of GOD's foes, evil spirits and wicked men. And yet, in the very terms wherein the Psalmist complains of the continued prevalence of the wicked, there is matter of comfort, for we have three (rather four, as A.V.) words to denote speaking, and only one, *doers*,

Z.

Hugo Card.



- B. to denote action, showing us that they are far more powerful with their tongues than with their hands. Hence too, we may gather that the teachers of false doctrine are the ungodly specially intended here.

5 They smite down thy people, O LORD : and trouble thine heritage.

6 They murder the widow, and the stranger : and put the fatherless to death.

- Agellius. Herein GOD is invoked by a double appeal. As King, He is reminded that it is His people, and His heritage, which is assailed; as Judge, He is called to the special duty of a guardian of the laws, the aid of the weak, oppressed by overmastering force. And we may explain the sixth verse not merely as defining the special part of God's heritage which is thus persecuted, but as being an exhaustive description of the whole. For an old Jewish writer has pointed out how aptly the titles of *widow* and *orphan* befitted the Hebrew nation, because it had no helper save God only, and was cut off from all other people by its peculiar rites and usages, whereas the Gentiles, by their mutual alliances and intercourse, had, as it were, a multitude of kindred to help them in any strait. So too the Christian expositors see here in the *widow*, the Church, or the faithful soul, waiting and longing for the absent Bridegroom; in the *orphan*, one looking only to a FATHER in heaven, having been given up by his former father, Satan, and his former mother, the world: in the *stranger*, one who having become a proselyte to the Church of God, has no continuing city here in the world, but has become an alien to his old companions, and seeks, as a pilgrim, his way to a better country. These are the victims chiefly afflicted by the proud, who cannot endure the silent rebuke of the lowly servants of CHRIST, their mute appeal to Him to shine forth as their defender.
- Philo Ju-  
dæus de  
Grat.
- A.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.
- Cocceius.

Bonar.

The Church has waited long,  
Her absent LORD to see,  
And still in loneliness she waits,  
A friendless stranger she.  
Age after age has gone,  
Sun after sun has set,  
And still in weeds of widowhood  
She weeps a mourner yet.  
Come then, LORD JESU, come.

7 And yet they say, Tush, the LORD shall not see : neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.

- Ay. He will not *see* the external act, nor *regard* or *understand*  
L. (LXX., Vulg.) the inward thought. Nevertheless, it is pre-



cisely as the God of *Jacob* that He is sure to regard it, for He spake to Moses in the Law: "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry; and My wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless." Some will have it that the verse does not actually imply the utterance of this blasphemy, but only a course of action in agreement with such a theory of God; but it seems more consonant with the scope of the Psalm and with the facts of history to explain the reference as being to that very *speaking disdainfully* of which the fourth verse complains. Thus the great poetical champion of practical atheism sings:

Omnis enim per se divum natura necesse est  
Immortali ævo summa cum pace fruatur,  
Semota ab nostris rebus sejunctaque longe;  
Nam privata dolore omni, privata periculis,  
Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nil indiga nostri,  
Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur ira.

Lucret. i.  
45.

For the whole nature of the Gods must needs  
Enjoy undying life in perfect peace,  
Removed and set afar from mortal deeds;  
Since from all pain and risk it hath release,  
Strong in its own resource, it lacks us not,  
Thanks for no good, nor grows in anger hot.

8 Take heed, ye unwise among the people : O ye fools, when will ye understand ?

They explain the *unwise among the people* as false teachers in the body of the Church, forming externally a part of God's heritage, although alien from it in spirit; while the *fools* are open infidels and blasphemers, or the uninstructed laity, contrasted with the evil clergy of the earlier clause. And of un wisdom and folly there are several kinds described in Holy Writ. There is that of mental imbecility; that of sheer wickedness or malice; that of base and filthy living; and that of unbelief and faithlessness. Yet the very words of reproach here addressed are enough to tell us that the condition of the fool is for the most part voluntary, for as S. Augustine wisely observes, If we could not be wise, and understand through our free-will, it would not be commanded us in the words of Scripture, *Take heed, ye unwise among the people, and ye fools, understand at last.* For in the very fact that it is prescribed and commanded that we should understand, it requires our obedience, which cannot possibly be yielded without free-will.

C.  
Honorius.  
Ay.

S. August.  
Epist. 46.



9 He that planted the ear, shall he not hear : or he that made the eye, shall he not see ?

- S. Hieron. It has been noticed, from a very early time, in arguing  
S. August. against those Anthropomorphite sectaries who attributed  
Epist. 111. bodily organs to God, that the Psalmist here does not as-  
Agellius. scribe ears and eyes to Him, but only the faculties of hearing  
and seeing, which He possesses, not by reason of having  
organs of sense, but as part of His essence ; since, if those  
faculties did not exist in Him, He could not have so con-  
ceived them as to make them part of the creation. They  
Bellarmine. dwell too, on the word *planted*, as implying design, in that  
the ear was not spontaneously evolved by an act of vital  
force, but independently created by God for a certain object,  
just as a tree, not of indigenous growth, is of set purpose  
planted in some new place by the hand of man. They draw  
another lesson from the term used of the creation of the eye,  
which is not merely *made*, as the Prayer Book version reads,  
but *formed*, *πλασας, finxit*, directing our attention to the won-  
derful mechanism of the organs of sight, and thence to the  
Le Blanc. marvellous skill of the Artificer. And CHRIST the LORD,  
Hugo Card. Who planted the spirit of obedience, which the ear typifies,  
in the heart of man, wills it to grow, which it cannot do un-  
less it be shined upon by the Sun of Righteousness ; that is,  
unless CHRIST Himself show us the nature, and set us an  
example, of that obedience. *Shall He not hear, then ? Shall*  
*He give a law, and not keep it Himself ? By no means, for*  
*it is written, " Though He were a Son, yet learned He obe-*  
Heb. v. 8. *dience by the things which He suffered," when He " became*  
Phil. ii. 8. *obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."* The ear  
is no garden or paradise of God if the words planted therein  
Cd. do not spring up, but remain as seeds in the sand, buried,  
rather than sown. And with respect to the eye, we are  
Ay. reminded that it, as well as the ear, has a double meaning ;  
for the inward sight is the faculty of spiritual understanding,  
which is necessary in order that we may comprehend, so as  
to carry out, the commands we have received through the  
ear. Wherefore that is wise counsel of the Rabbins, that  
Pirke Avoth. the three best safeguards against falling into sin, are to re-  
member first, that there is an ear which hears everything ;  
secondly, that there is an eye which sees everything ; thirdly,  
that there is a hand which writes everything in the Book of  
Knowledge which shall be opened at the Judgment.

10 Or he that nurtureth the heathen : it is he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he punish ?

The word *nurtureth* here does not express the original with accuracy. We may choose between the *chastiseth* of A. V. and Vulgate, or the *instructeth* of the Targum and LXX.,



either of which will yield an adequate sense, the one pointing to the temporal punishments inflicted by God on whole nations, as the Egyptians, Canaanites, Assyria, and Babylon; the other, to His instruction, on the one hand by the agency of Holy Writ and the teaching of the Prophets and Apostles, and on the other, by the operation of the individual conscience, and of human laws regulating the limits of right and wrong even amongst those to whom no revelation had been granted. *It is He that teacheth man knowledge.* This is the office of God the HOLY GHOST, Who teacheth us and guides us into all truth, and Who acts towards us as a master that instructs his pupils in school, but expects them, on pain of stripes for failure, to repeat correctly to him the lesson he has thus taught. *Shall not He punish?* The word is rather *reprove*, ἐλέγξει, *arguet*, and fits in thus precisely with that saying of CHRIST touching the Comforter, "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment;" of sin which they did not shun, of righteousness which they did not love, of judgment which they did not fear. But if we accept the reading *punish*, we may then remember that God punishes in three ways: in love, and gently, for the purification and trial of His Saints; in anger, for the conversion of sinners; and in wrathful indignation, for the destruction of the obstinately impenitent.

D. C.

C.

Cajetanus.

Z.

Hugo Card.

The Gloss.

Hugo Card.

s. John xvi.

8.

Ay.

11 The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man : that they are but vain.

There are three kinds of thoughts which come into the mind of man; those which God inspires, which are wise and holy; those which the devil suggests, which are evil and impure: and those which man devises for himself, and these are *vain*. Lest we should think that such vanity can be attributed only to the unwise and fools of whom a previous verse speaks, the Apostle, citing this passage, reads it, "The LORD knoweth the thoughts of *the wise*, that they are vain," as being engaged about transitory matters to the exclusion of eternal interests.

P.

1 Cor. iii. 20.

12 Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD : and teachest him in thy law ;

Here is the true contrast to the vanity and sorrow of the man who is left to his own thoughts, the blessedness of the Saint whom God Himself *instructs* (LXX. Vulg.) And observe that there are two distinct kinds of instruction, that which God conveys personally, that is, in time past by His life as Man on earth as our example and pattern, but now by inner light, warning, and inspiration; and that which He bestows upon attentive students or hearers of His Word. And this teaching has four several objects, which are the

Bellarmine.

Cocceius.

Ay.



avoidance of sin, the keeping of the commandments, the escaping everlasting punishment, and the desire of eternal life.

13 That thou mayest give him patience in time of adversity : until the pit be digged up for the ungodly.

- Agellius. It is something more than *patience*, it is the *rest*, (A. V.) or *tranquillity*, implied in the LXX. *παύειν*, which God bestows on the souls, not on the bodies, of those whom He teaches, so that although the Saint must endure sorrow and trial here, yet God *mitigates* (Vulg.) it for him, by giving him such delight in the law, and such spiritual joy as enables him to bear up against the weight of trouble; seeing that unmixed gladness is not given here, but in our Country.
- 2 Cor. i. 7. Therefore the Apostle encourages his converts, saying, "As ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation;" and in another place, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing," where we may observe that the word *sorrowful* is qualified by the word *as*, in order to denote that the rejoicing overpowers it; which is more clearly set forth a little later in the same epistle: "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations."
- 2 Cor. vi. 10.
- 2 Cor. vii. 4.
- S. Basil. M. Theodoret. The Greek Fathers explain the *day of adversity* to be the final judgment of the ungodly, and allege that suffering patiently endured in this world makes the tribunal of CHRIST less awful, and insures a milder sentence. *Until the pit be digged up for the ungodly*. The metaphor may be taken either from the pitfalls made by hunters to entrap wild beasts, or from the preparing the grave of a dying man. Either way, the words imply the certain destruction of sinners, and fix a limit to the sufferings of God's scholars.
- C. This pit is one which sinners dig for themselves by their vices, and which the avenging Angels of God complete. And the intention of the ungodly is to make a high mound for their own exaltation, not observing that every increase of the height of it does but increase at the same time the depth of the yawning hollow at its base, into which they will surely fall; whether we take the *pit* itself to be shame and ruin in this world, bodily death, or condemnation at the Doom. But there is another pit, unlike all these, dug for the sinner in this life, to win him from his evil courses, namely, the wound in the spear-pierced side of CHRIST; open to receive all who will take refuge there from their enemies, as did the Israelites who hid themselves in pits from the Philistine invaders. This pit continues to be dug all the time of this mortal life, because the call to repentance is unceasing, and therefore the troubles of the righteous are mitigated here, as one and another of his former oppressors are united to the company of the elect.
- A.
- Ay.
- 1 Sam. xiii. 6.



14 For the LORD will not fail his people : neither will he forsake his inheritance ;

This is the answer to the complaint in the fifth verse of the havoc wrought by wicked doers against God's *people and heritage*. It is the assurance, not merely that their destructiveness will be checked in due time, but that it is in fact only an instrument in God's hands for the fatherly correction of His chosen, and that only for a little time. Agellius.

15 Until righteousness turn again unto judgment : all such as are true of heart shall follow it.

They explain this difficult passage in more ways than one, both literally and mystically. And first, it may refer to the effects of God's teaching. Justice and judgment have become separate, and even opposite things, man's law has not been according to right and truth, but God will not forsake His inheritance, nor cease His instruction, till He has wrought a change in this respect, and till justice is once more faithfully dispensed by the judges who sit to try causes. Or again, it may be God's judgment which is called in question by man, as though He were not equal in His dealings, because allowing the righteous to be oppressed and the wicked to prosper. Here again God will continue His teaching till He vindicates Himself to us, till we learn that the Judge of all the earth *must* do right. Mystically they take the words as referring to the Day of Judgment, when CHRIST Himself, our Righteousness, shall turn from His long-suffering and patience unto judgment upon sinners ; and when His Saints and Apostles, who have borne affliction and injustice here below, shall sit with Him as His assessors to try the very sinners who persecuted them upon earth. There is one other explanation, in part the same as this : that God did not forsake His people and inheritance of Israel, until Incarnate Righteousness was brought into judgment before Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate, and denied, rejected, and condemned by His subjects. *All they that are true of heart shall follow it.* That is, as they variously explain, all the Saints shall come with CHRIST unto judgment ; or shall agree in the sentence He pronounces ; or again, shall be themselves in full conformity with CHRIST's righteousness. Some of the Latins point the sentence differently, and read with an interrogation, *Who shall be along with it ?* That is, Who shall be assessors at that true judgment ? and the answer is : the *true of heart*. And on this truth or righteousness of heart, let us hear S. Augustine, " Because God is right, when thou fixest thine heart on Him, let thy care be to have a right heart, that God may be pleasant to it in all things. Let it be right with the rightness of intention, with the exclusion of froward Genebrardus. Campensis. Titelman. De Muis. C. S. Albertus Magnus. Theodoret. S. Cyril. Alex. P. S. Bruno Carth. Ay. A.



thoughts, with steadfastness in contemplation. Let it be ready to follow the Will of God, in whatsoever direction it may know that will to move. Let it tend upwards, to contemplate and desire heavenly and divine things alone. Let it be pure, so as to suffer no evil thing to linger within it, nor let it account the tiniest stumbling-block as bearable, in its own conscience or in another's."

16 Who will rise up with me against the wicked :  
or who will take my part against the evil-doers?

- Bellarmino. Seeing then that all injustice will most surely come to an end, the Psalmist asks who will be bold enough, in the mean time, while the reign of justice is still put off, to range himself on the side of oppressed truth, and to fight for the cause of God, when that cause seems to have the worst. It is true that God alone, without any helper, is able to defend and avenge His elect, but they who refuse to take His side will be involved in the punishment of His enemies, even though they did not actually share in their crime. Just so, in the laws of Sparta, it was enacted that whoso allowed any offence to be committed in his presence without protest, subjected himself to the full penalty due to the offence itself. And thus, when Israel made the golden calf, Moses said, "Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me," and employed the Levites as the instruments of Divine vengeance against the idolaters. So it may be taken, as many do take it, of the appeal made by CHRIST Himself for aid, not as really needing it, but in order that those who share His battle may share His triumph; and that He calls His disciples to resist, like Him, the temptation of *wicked* spirits, and the persecutions of the *evildoers* amongst men, Jews, Pagans, and worldly unbelievers. Or, as another, slightly varying, takes it, the SAVIOUR cries, "I am holy, I was lifted up on the Cross, I died and rose again, and ascended a Conqueror to heaven. Which of the Saints, then, will arise and stand with Me? which shall be counted worthy, not only of the Resurrection, but of a place at My side?" But most of these expositors agree in understanding the passage of the conflict against sin in this life; while one aptly points the metaphor by comparing it to a sudden night-attack upon a city, when the captain of the garrison sounds the alarm for his soldiers, that they may *arise*, quitting their beds, and then *stand* with him upon the walls to repel the foe. Arising without standing is not enough, for there are many who so far arise as to teach men to resist the inward temptations of wicked spirits, but who do not stand when themselves corrupted by the example and seeming prosperity of human evil-doers. And that more fail than endure the test in this way is clear from the very word of inquiry, *Who?* denoting that the speaker is, for the time at least, alone.
- L.
- Piatarch.
- Lyranus.
- Exod. xxxii. 26.
- Ay.
- Pseudo-Hieron.
- S. Bruno Carth.
- Hugo Card.



17 If the LORD had not helped me : it had not failed but my soul had been put to silence.

This is a confession at once of the magnitude of the peril, and of the grace of GOD ; it casts aside every thought of personal strength or merit, and acknowledges man's utter feebleness when not upheld by the arm of the LORD. The second clause is more exactly rendered by the A.V. *My soul had almost dwelt in silence*, which last word is explained by LXX. and Vulgate as Hades or hell (*inferno*). The literal meaning is a narrow escape from physical death ; but mystically it is taken of CHRIST, Whose soul was not left in hell, and Who here, in His manhood, gives thanks to His FATHER for the Resurrection. Then it applies to each of His members, who, but for that same Resurrection, would themselves have dwelt in Hades, or even in the lower deeps of Gehenna, but who are now risen with CHRIST. And finally, the words may be used by any faithful soul who feels that only God's grace has preserved him from yielding to temptation and persecution, so as to fall into the pit and darkness of sin.

Bellarmine.

Cd.

Ay.

Brevv.  
Ambros.  
et Paris.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
S. Greg. M.  
Mor. iii. 2.

18 But when I said, My foot hath slipped : thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.

See how GOD loves confession. Thy foot slips, and thou dost not say, *My foot slips*, but thou sayest that thou standest when thou art falling. So then, if thou have begun slipping, if thou have commenced to totter, confess thy slip, that thou mayest not have to bewail thy fall, that He may help thee, that thy soul be not in hell. GOD wishes for confession, He wishes for humility.

A.

Again, if these be words of CHRIST Himself, then His *foot* denotes any of His Apostles and preachers, who carry Him throughout the world by proclaiming the Gospel. These feet of His slipped, when they lost faith during His Passion. Peter denied Him, and all the others forsook Him and fled, breaking the faith they had vowed to CHRIST. But God's mercy at once helped these slipping feet by leading them back to faith through repentance.

Ay.

Any one, then, who is tempted or oppressed, and who fears to fall through consent or impatience, may use these words that he may be helped against falling by God's mercy, when calling upon Him. That thou perish not, call upon God, saying, "LORD, save me," and straightway He stretcheth out the hand of His mercy as He did unto Peter, saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

S. Matt. xiv. 30.

19 In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart : thy comforts have refreshed my soul.

The word here translated, as by LXX. and Vulgate, *sor-*



- Bellarmino.** *rows*, is more exactly *anxious thoughts*, those which branch out in different directions, and thus cause perplexity. *In the multitude* of these, or, as most of the old versions take it, *according to the multitude* of them, in exact proportion to man's need, God sends His consolation. And in this sense, the word *heart*, or *within me* (S. Hieron.) is emphatic, since God does not give bodily comforts to the righteous in this life as a set-off against bodily pains; but He does give them spiritual comforts as a support in both physical and mental trouble. The special word here found in the Hebrew for *comforts*, תַּנְחוּמִים,<sup>1</sup> occurs in only two other places; Isaiah lvi. 11, and Jeremiah xvi. 7; in the former of which it is applied to the mother who stills her crying infant by giving it the breast; and in the latter is used of the cup of strong wine, called the "cup of consolation," given to mourners at a funeral by their friends, as the first refreshment after the fast for the dead. The fullest and yet the briefest comment on the passage is to be found in the words of S. Paul: "As ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation."
- 2 Cor. i. 7.**

20 Wilt thou have anything to do with the stool of wickedness : which imagineth mischief as a law ?

- Agellius.** *The stool of wickedness.* It ought rather to be, as in LXX. and A.V. the *throne of iniquity* or *lawlessness*. That is, the Psalmist is protesting not against mere obscure thieves and murderers, but against princes and judges, who pervert the laws they should defend, and by false judgments or wicked enactments oppress the people of God, and endeavour to destroy His Church, as did Antiochus Epiphanes and the Pagan Emperors in their various statutes against those who refused to conform to idolatrous rites. He asks if God, by tolerating them any longer, and delaying their punishment, can consent to be ranked, even in thought, on their side, and to be supposed their partner in guilt. The Greeks push the idea further, and identify the *throne of lawlessness* with Satan, who *frameth toil in commandment* (LXX.) that is, who either puts some troublesome obstacle in the way of our obedience to God, through which we have to force our path laboriously, or else, by making the yoke of religion too heavy to bear by means of burdensome additions and stern repression, induces men to throw it off altogether. The Vulgate reading in the latter clause is different, *Thou Who framest toil in commandment*, taking the words as still referring to God. That is, seeing that Thy commandments are so clear and precise, and that Thou art so desirous that they should be perfectly and laboriously observed, even through toil and
- Z.**
- Bellarmino.**
- S. Bruno Carth.**

<sup>1</sup> The feminine form תַּנְחוּמִּים is found in Job xv. 11, and xxi. 2.



sorrow, can it be that Thou art indifferent to right and wrong, and careless, like iniquitous judges, that the law is broken? or wilt Thou suffer those who will not toil in the commandment, but who have given themselves to the service of Satan, and their souls to be his throne of iniquity, to have any place or fellowship with Thee?

Honorius.  
Hugo Card.

There is an alternative explanation, moreover, applying the whole verse to an unrepentant sinner. Wilt thou not be converted, wilt thou suffer the throne of iniquity, that "seat of the scornful" of which another Psalm speaks, the habitual practice of sin, to be inseparably joined to thee, thou who feignest (*fingis*) that God's commands are too laborious and difficult for man to keep?

D. C.

Ps. l. 1.

21 They gather them together against the soul of the righteous : and condemn the innocent blood.

It is the history of the sufferings of martyrs in all times of persecution, but especially of their King, the SAVIOUR Himself, Who is, in an especial sense, the Righteous and Innocent. It is against the righteous they gather themselves, for him they *will hunt* (LXX. and Vulg.) because the souls of the unrighteous are their prey already, and they do not need to entrap afresh those who are ensnared. Euthymius, who explains, as already mentioned, the twentieth verse as a prayer against allowing Satan to take any part in the Last Judgment, will have it that the reason for that prayer is given here; namely, that the evil spirits will bring against the righteous accusations of sins committed either ignorantly or unwillingly, in order to ensnare them. The Carmelite, dwelling on the former explanation, observes that there are three things, any one of which makes a condemnation unjust: innocence on the part of the accused; irregularity in matter of law, especially failure of evidence; and hostile bias on the part of the judge; all which, he observes, were united in the sentence passed on the LORD JESUS. And lest we should pass over the verse as having no warning or lesson for ourselves, we are seasonably reminded that slander, detraction, and calumny, is a condemning of innocent blood, even if it be not actually aimed at the life of the victim. Slander is unjust judgment, because it is a sentence passed by one who has no authorization as judge in the matter at all, because the same person acts as sole judge and witness, and that without any oath binding him to speak the truth; because there is no examination of the witness, and contrary evidence, even when stronger, is not admitted, and because the most frivolous and inconsistent conjectures are accepted as proofs.

C.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.

Z.

Ay.

Hugo Card.

22 But the LORD is my refuge : and my God is the strength of my confidence.



- Honorius. This is the triumphant cry of CHRIST's soldiers, recking nothing of the confederacy against them, knowing that they too are banded together, under an invincible Captain, against the throne of iniquity ; and are to condemn the blood of the guilty when they sit by Him in judgment upon them. God is the *refuge* of His Saints when He shelters them from evil, the temptations of sin, or the persecutions of enemies. He is the *strength of their confidence*, when He aids them in holiness, helping them to hope, and to obtain what they hope for, and that by the co-operation of His grace, so that their hope is not in vain, but they are able to do all things through Him that strengtheneth them. The words are explained also of CHRIST Himself, as well as of His followers, with special reference to the Resurrection.
- D. C.
- Ay.

23 He shall recompense them their wickedness, and destroy them in their own malice : yea, the LORD our God shall destroy them.

- A. Here S. Augustine bids us notice the stress on the words *in their own malice*, whence he draws the lesson that God punishes us not so much for the things we do, as for the motive wherewith we do them. Judas Iscariot delivered up the LORD JESUS to death, but GOD the FATHER delivered Him up also. The sin of Judas worked out the purpose of God, and brought us a priceless blessing, but we thank God only, and turn away from the crime of the traitor. So too the persecutors of the martyrs were, all unwittingly, preparing and gemming crowns of gold for them, but in hate, which is the reason of their condemnation, the adequate cause of that vengeance which shall fall upon them, when the LORD God shows Himself.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD GOD ; glory be to the SON, the Judge of the world ; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Whose comforts refresh the souls of the Saints.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

- Ludolph. Teach us, O LORD, with the good-will of Thy law, and be our refuge in trouble, Who wisely teachest man knowledge that he may not sin. (1.)
- Mozarabic. Fail not Thy people, O LORD, whom Thou hast purchased ; neither forsake the inheritance for which Thou didst hang upon the Cross, but until such time as Thy justice, now hidden, shall shine forth in manifest judgment, guide us with Thine outstretched loving-kindness, and according to the multitude of our sorrows, make us glad with Thine encou-



rage, that Thou Who now framest toil in commandment, mayest grant us rest in the world to come. (11.)

Grant us, O LORD, the desirable gift of power to do, whereby we may be able to rise up against the ungodly, and to oppose the sayings of the wicked, and as a pit is made ready for those who work iniquity against Thee, so let there be a glorious dwelling made ready in the heavens for us who believe. (11.)

Mozarabic.

Arise, O LORD, Who judgest the earth, and Who dealest vengeance to the proud: bestow on Thy redeemed the medicine of Thy lovingkindness, and grant mercy to the guilty, Who wait for us adjudged to the Cross by ungodly men. (11.)

Mozarabic.  
Passiontide.

O God, the help of our hope, be the refuge of Thy servants in every need, soften the evil days for us, and let the consolations of Thy lovingkindness ever make our soul glad. (1.)

D. C.

## PSALM XCV.

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: A Prayer of a Song for David.

### ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, the Good Shepherd, predestines His sheep unto eternal rest. The Voice of the Church to the LORD touching the Jews. The Voice of CHRIST to the Apostles, or of the Church to the LORD touching the Jews. The Voice of the Church to CHRIST, and of the Prophet concerning the unbelief of the Jews. The Voice of the Church advising repentance.

VEN. BEDE. *Praise* denotes devotion of voice, *song* cheerfulness of mind, *for David*, CHRIST our SAVIOUR, to the end that we may come together and rejoice, not in vain delights, but in the LORD. The Prophet, foreseeing that the Jews would be able to resist CHRIST, at the first opening invites their tribes to the singing of Psalms, describing the LORD's praises with the sweetest truth. *O come, let us sing unto the Lord.* Secondly, the LORD Himself speaks, that the aforesaid people should not harden its heart, lest that should befall them which befell their fathers, who did not attain to enter the land of promise. *Harden not your hearts.*

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David. Literally, when the people passed over by Jordan; and he hints in it the despair of the Jews. *I was vexed with this generation. As I swear in My wrath.*

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. The calling of the Jews, and their rejection.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of encouragement, and as it were of command.



## VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian.* Daily: Invitatory at Matins. [Epiphany: III. Nocturn.]<sup>1</sup>

*Monastic.* Daily: Invitatory at Matins.

*Ambrosian.* Thursday of Second Week: II. Nocturn. [Christmas Day: III. Nocturn. Epiphany: III. Nocturn.]

*Parisian and Lyons.* As *Gregorian*.

*Quignon.* Tuesday: Lauds.

## ANTIPHONS.

In the *Gregorian* and identical uses the Antiphons to this Psalm recur as intercalations in the Psalm itself, are called *Invitatories*, and vary for every day and festival.<sup>2</sup>

*Ambrosian.* Let us heartily rejoice in the God of our salvation. [Christmas Day: This is the SAVIOUR, of Whom the Prophet spake; and this is the Lamb, of which Isaiah spake. Gabriel announced to the Virgin, let us worship Him, and serve Him. Epiphany: Come, every creature, let us worship the LORD, Who hath shined upon us, Whom the Prophets preached, from Moses unto John the Baptist. *Ÿ*. To-day CHRIST hath appeared, GOD of GOD, Light of Light.]

*Mosarabic.* Let us come before the face of the LORD with thanksgiving,\* and show ourselves glad in Him with Psalms.

The use of this Psalm as introductory to Divine Service is of very remote antiquity, in both the Eastern and Western Church. In the former it has for many centuries been abbreviated into a short invitatory or anthem based on the first, third, sixth, and seventh verses; while in the latter the Psalm itself has been retained in full, along with the invitatory. There are traces of its liturgical use in the Pseudo-Athanasius and in S. Augustine, and it had assumed its present position before the time of S. Benedict. Its mode of employment in the Temple Services is not accurately known, but it is used now in the synagogues of the Ashkenazin as the first of a series preparatory to the great Sabbath Psalm xcii. And on the Christian use of the Psalm Honorius of Autun observes in the *Gemma Animæ*, that the Precentor who begins the invitatory is the herald who summons the soldiers of the watch to mount guard, and when he has done his part, all join in singing the Venite as soldiers assembling in camp to praise their King. And then they apportion the watches amongst themselves, as they proceed to chant the three nocturns.

1 O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.

<sup>1</sup> There is, however, one remarkable difference in the use of this Psalm on the Epiphany from its ferial employment. As a rule, it is not recited in the Vulgate, but in the version of

the old Roman Psalter; but on the Epiphany the Vulgate is conformed to.

<sup>2</sup> For examples, see Vol. I., pp. 43, ff.



The Prophet invites us to a great banquet of rejoicing, not in the world, but in the LORD. And in saying, *O come*, he means that those who are far off are to draw near. But how can we be far off from Him Who is everywhere present? By unlikeness to Him, by an evil life, by evil habits. A man standing still in one spot draws near to God by loving Him, and by loving unrighteousness he withdraws from God; he does not move his feet, and yet he can both approach and retire, for our feet, in this journey, are our affections. *Come* then, ye Gentiles, who are far from the city of Jerusalem, who are in Babylon, the city of Satan, *come* from unbelief to faith, from the devil your seducer to CHRIST your SAVIOUR. *Come*, as sick men to a physician to obtain health, as scholars to their master to learn wisdom, as thirsty men to a fountain, as fugitives to a sanctuary, as blind men to the sun. *Let us sing unto the Lord.* Why then do we find it said, Blessed are they that mourn, and woe to you that laugh? Surely because they are blessed who mourn to the world, and woe is to them that laugh to the world, but blessed are they who exult unto the LORD, who know not how to be glad of rapine, of fraud, of their neighbours' tears. He exults unto the LORD who in word, deed, and work, exults not for himself, but for his Maker. *In the strength of our salvation.* The simplest comment on these words is the version of S. Jerome, who translates, *to Jesus our Rock.*

A.

Honorius.

Ay.

Le Blanc.

S. Pet.

Chrysol.

Serm. 46.

S. Matt. v.

S. Luke vi.

S. Hieron.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving : and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.

For *come before* the LXX. and Vulgate have, much better, *anticipate* (*προφθάσωμεν, præoccupemus*) *His face*, that is, let us make haste to meet Him, not waiting till He sends to call us before Him. Not that we can in any way forestall God's grace and bounty to us, but that we may offer our thanksgiving with sufficient promptness to avoid the charge of ingratitude. Again, whereas the LXX. and Vulgate word in this clause is not *thanksgiving*, but *confession*, which may be either the confession of God's might and goodness, or of our own frailty and sin, the confession of praise or the confession of grief, we are bid, in this second sense, to come away from our sins, to come in penitence to God, before He comes to judgment. We cannot forestall the Searcher of hearts, Who knoweth our sins, and seeth our secret thoughts, and foreseeth things yet to come; but we can confess now, while there is hope of mercy, a time of pardon, a place of repentance, to our FATHER, that we feel not our Judge, when He cometh for the second time, remembering how often the *face* of God stands in Holy Writ for His wrath. And the reasons why such forestalling ought to be prompt are, first, that delay in confession when there is an opportunity for it, enhances sin, because the soul is kept just so much the

Cajetanus.

A.

S. Pet.

Chrysol.

Z.

Ay.



- longer in the fetters of evil habit; next, that this continued habit makes the soul less able to resist the next temptation of Satan, and more liable to fall into fresh sins; and thirdly, that we cannot be sure, if we delay, that either the time or the capacity to repent will be granted us. And this idea we find in the Responsory of the Second Nocturn of the First Sunday in Lent: "Let us amend for the better those things wherein we have ignorantly sinned, lest suddenly forestalled (*præoccupati*) by the day of death, we seek time for repentance, and be not able to find it." And we may note that the phrase of coming before God's face is sometimes used in Holy Writ for offering sacrifice, as thus: "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?" The chief constituent of the sacrifice of thanksgiving under the Mosaic code was an oblation of cakes of fine flour and wafer-bread, and thus we may justly see in this place a prophecy of the Sacrifice of the New Law, that Eucharistic oblation of praise and thanksgiving wherein CHRIST is Himself offered in a mystery to the FATHER. *And show ourselves glad in Him with psalms.* We may take the words in their obvious literal sense of the continuous use of the Psalter in the public and private devotions of Christians, who begin with the praises of God before they ask for gifts to satisfy their needs; not like starving men who fall at once upon food set before them, ere they greet their host. But the majority of the Latins take *psalms*, as usual, to denote the combination of will and action in good works, because the word implies the use of an instrument as well as of the voice. And we may be glad with psalms when we are alone, as well as when joining with others in the offices of the Church, saying, *O come*, all ye powers of my soul, my whole being, and all that is within me, especially my reason, memory, and will: *let us come*, and let us be glad together in the LORD.
- Brev. Rom. L.  
S. Greg. Naz. de plag. grand. Agellius.  
Micah vi. 6.  
Lev. vii. 12.  
S. Ambros. de Sacr. vi. 5.  
D. C.

### 3 For the LORD is a great God : and a great King above all gods.

- The force of this verse is somewhat weakened in all the versions, by their failing to give the precise point of the Hebrew, which is that *Jehovah*, the God of Israel, is the One supreme Deity, exalted not only above all the false gods of the heathen, but over all angels and spirits, which however superior in power and wisdom to man, are yet inferior to Him. The literal rendering is, "For *JEHOVAH* is a great El, and a great King over all Elohim." To us, the words teach the mystery of the Eternal Son, pointing out that our LORD, even in His mortal Body, *is a great God*, by reason of the hypostatic union, and also because He is the express Image of the FATHER, whence we find this very title
- Bellarmino.  
S. Pet. Chrysol.  
Anon. Græc. ap.  
Cd.



given Him by the Apostle, saying, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST." And observe how it is true of Him in a special sense, wherein it was not true of God as revealed under the Law, that He is *a great King above all gods*, for the Gospel has made successful war against idolatry amongst many lands and nations, which Judaism left quite unaffected; while, in turn, it has never itself been supplanted anywhere by polytheism; and CHRIST is, moreover, the King Whom all the gods, all those Saints and rulers of His Church whom He hath made partakers of Him, obey and love. Here the Roman Psalter adds a clause not in the Hebrew, LXX., or Vulgate: *For the Lord will not repel His people*, that Christian people which He hath purchased with His own Blood, will not reject it crying, praying, seeking, or knocking, to Him.

Titus ii. 13.

Genebrardus.

S. Bruno Carth.

Hugo Card.

4 In his Hand are all the corners of the earth :  
and the strength of the hills is his also.

If we take this verse and the following one as descriptive of the power of God over creation, there is no better commentary on them than the words of Isaiah : "He hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." But the fuller explanation is to take it as depending on the previous verse, and as pointing out that while various false gods are locally worshipped in special places, He only is LORD everywhere. And thus we shall see a reference here to the Catholic Church, no longer bounded by the narrow limits of a single people, but drawn from all the nations of the earth. This view derives especial force from the consideration that while there is one false creed, Buddhism, whose adherents numerically exceed Christians, yet it is practically limited to the east of Asia, to China, Japan, Thibet, and Ceylon; while the Gospel has spread into every part of the world, and covers an enormously larger area of supremacy than any other creed, dominant as it is in Europe, America, and Australia, the belief of the Russian and English masters of half Asia, and pushing its frontier ever further to the north from the ends of Africa itself, to join at last the weak remnant of the ancient Egyptian Church. *The strength (or height, A.V.) of the hills is His also.* The words not only denote the empire of God over the most inaccessible and untrodden regions, but the overthrow of heathen temples, so often situated in high places, and the rearing of Christian shrines on the eminences of Tabor, Sinai, Athos, and many another famous hill. Mystically, *all the corners of the earth* may denote all the powers and faculties of man (a notion brought out better

Agellius.

Isa. xl. 12.

Titelman.

Honorius.

Titelman.

L.



by the literal Hebrew, *all the deep places of the earth*), while the lofty mountains are types of the exalted citizen of heaven. Yet again, the earth is often put for men of earthly and grovelling minds, mountains for Saints lifted on high in contemplation of Divine things, alike subject to the sway of the same LORD, Who guides at His will the wealth and honours of earth, the rewards and glories of heaven.

5 The sea is his, and he made it : and his hands prepared the dry land.

Honorius. It is a curious fact, noticed by some of the old commentators, that there is nothing said in the first chapter of Genesis about the creation of the sea, and from this circumstance, certain early heretics maintained that God was not its Maker. This error answers to the commonest mystical interpretation of the *sea* in this place, namely, that it denotes the Gentile nations, tossed about in the bitterness and barrenness of heathenism, whom the Jews, in their spiritual pride, refused to believe God's children and care. But He made them, as it is written : "Doubtless Thou art our FATHER, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not : Thou, O LORD, art our FATHER, our Redeemer." *And His hands prepared the dry land.* This *land*, differing from the sea in stability and in capacity of fruitfulness, denotes the Church, or any holy soul. It is *dry*, because without the grace of God it can do nothing, as land will not bear unless it be watered, but it gaspeth to Him as a thirsty ground. He *formed* (A.V., LXX., Vulg.), which means more than He *made* it, implying that He gave shape and beauty, and fulness, to that which before was "without form and void," by reason of Adam's sin.

Isa. lxiii. 16. *made* them, as it is written : "Doubtless Thou art our FATHER, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not : Thou, O LORD, art our FATHER, our Redeemer." *And His hands prepared the dry land.* This *land*, differing from the sea in stability and in capacity of fruitfulness, denotes the Church, or any holy soul. It is *dry*, because without the grace of God it can do nothing, as land will not bear unless it be watered, but it gaspeth to Him as a thirsty ground. He *formed* (A.V., LXX., Vulg.), which means more than He *made* it, implying that He gave shape and beauty, and fulness, to that which before was "without form and void," by reason of Adam's sin.

S. Bruno Carth. *made* them, as it is written : "Doubtless Thou art our FATHER, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not : Thou, O LORD, art our FATHER, our Redeemer." *And His hands prepared the dry land.* This *land*, differing from the sea in stability and in capacity of fruitfulness, denotes the Church, or any holy soul. It is *dry*, because without the grace of God it can do nothing, as land will not bear unless it be watered, but it gaspeth to Him as a thirsty ground. He *formed* (A.V., LXX., Vulg.), which means more than He *made* it, implying that He gave shape and beauty, and fulness, to that which before was "without form and void," by reason of Adam's sin.

Ps. cxliii. 6. *made* them, as it is written : "Doubtless Thou art our FATHER, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not : Thou, O LORD, art our FATHER, our Redeemer." *And His hands prepared the dry land.* This *land*, differing from the sea in stability and in capacity of fruitfulness, denotes the Church, or any holy soul. It is *dry*, because without the grace of God it can do nothing, as land will not bear unless it be watered, but it gaspeth to Him as a thirsty ground. He *formed* (A.V., LXX., Vulg.), which means more than He *made* it, implying that He gave shape and beauty, and fulness, to that which before was "without form and void," by reason of Adam's sin.

Gen. i. 2. *made* them, as it is written : "Doubtless Thou art our FATHER, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not : Thou, O LORD, art our FATHER, our Redeemer." *And His hands prepared the dry land.* This *land*, differing from the sea in stability and in capacity of fruitfulness, denotes the Church, or any holy soul. It is *dry*, because without the grace of God it can do nothing, as land will not bear unless it be watered, but it gaspeth to Him as a thirsty ground. He *formed* (A.V., LXX., Vulg.), which means more than He *made* it, implying that He gave shape and beauty, and fulness, to that which before was "without form and void," by reason of Adam's sin.

6 O come, let us worship and fall down : and kneel before the LORD our Maker.

Agellius. Coccetus. Here the duty of bodily reverence to God is set before us, and the words denote a climax of humility ; we are to *worship*, that is, to bend the head, as servants before their master, to *fall down*, as subjects acknowledging their king, to *kneel* as suppliants beseeching a favour. But the LXX. and Vulgate, instead of *kneel*, read *weep*,<sup>1</sup> and on this word lies all the stress of the expositors. Cassiodorus observes that God calls His people first to rejoice, while they are as yet unacquainted with religion, lest they should be alarmed and repelled by its sorrows and austerities ; but when they have once accepted the faith, He then summons them to repentance for their sins. Nay, rather, observes a Saint, they are tears of joy, for gladness brings weeping, as well as sorrow,

C. Here the duty of bodily reverence to God is set before us, and the words denote a climax of humility ; we are to *worship*, that is, to bend the head, as servants before their master, to *fall down*, as subjects acknowledging their king, to *kneel* as suppliants beseeching a favour. But the LXX. and Vulgate, instead of *kneel*, read *weep*,<sup>1</sup> and on this word lies all the stress of the expositors. Cassiodorus observes that God calls His people first to rejoice, while they are as yet unacquainted with religion, lest they should be alarmed and repelled by its sorrows and austerities ; but when they have once accepted the faith, He then summons them to repentance for their sins. Nay, rather, observes a Saint, they are tears of joy, for gladness brings weeping, as well as sorrow,

S. Pet. Chrysol. Here the duty of bodily reverence to God is set before us, and the words denote a climax of humility ; we are to *worship*, that is, to bend the head, as servants before their master, to *fall down*, as subjects acknowledging their king, to *kneel* as suppliants beseeching a favour. But the LXX. and Vulgate, instead of *kneel*, read *weep*,<sup>1</sup> and on this word lies all the stress of the expositors. Cassiodorus observes that God calls His people first to rejoice, while they are as yet unacquainted with religion, lest they should be alarmed and repelled by its sorrows and austerities ; but when they have once accepted the faith, He then summons them to repentance for their sins. Nay, rather, observes a Saint, they are tears of joy, for gladness brings weeping, as well as sorrow,

<sup>1</sup> Either because the LXX. read  $\piνεν$  instead of  $\καθηνυεν$ , or because their own text  $\δουλωμεν$  was accidentally altered into  $καλωμεν$ .



and then grief for our past sins is blended with the hope of blessing and glory to come. Some commentators, who take this psalm as having special reference to the Nativity of CHRIST, bid us see here a command to adore Him in the manger, undeterred by the tokens of mortality and lowliness around. We may well weep, even amidst our Christmas joy, in sympathy for the sorrows He came to bear, and for our own sins which laid such a burden upon His shoulders. And thus S. Augustine remarks: "If women, when about to put on their attire, are careful to wash away any stains with water, why should not we still more wash away with tears the stains of our souls, when the Nativity of our LORD is coming to us?"

Theodor.  
Mopnest.  
Le Blanc.

S. August.  
Serm. 15.

7 For he is the LORD our God : and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

Note, remarks S. Augustine, the graceful change in the order of the words. It is not, as we might think more exact, *the sheep of His pasture and the people of His hand*. And that in order to teach us that we, even as *people*, are *sheep* in respect of God, needing Him as our Shepherd, capable of being satisfied with His green pastures only, and yet not unreasoning sheep, which must be driven with a staff, but guided with God's own *Hand*, the very Hand which made them, and which is sedulous in its loving care to prevent any harm to the flock from the negligence, ignorance, or malice of those inferior shepherds, those pastors and teachers, to whom He commits, in a measure, the task of herding. He feeds us with bread from heaven now, as He fed our spiritual forefathers with manna in the wilderness ; and He cares for us, as a shepherd for his flock, so that we need not do so for ourselves, but cast all our care on Him, and be like sheep in fruitfulness, patience, and innocence.

A.

Bellarmino.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

S. Bonaven-  
tura.

8 To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts : as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness :

9 When your fathers tempted me : proved me, and saw my works.

*To-day*, that is, "daily, while it is called to-day," as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews comments, in one of his threefold citations of this verse ; so long as the night has not come, so long as the door of mercy is not shut. *To-day*, in the time of grace, when He speaks to us by His SON, not by the Law. *To-day*, at once, not deferring till to-morrow. *If ye will hear His voice*, is the reply to the assertion in the previous verse, "We are the sheep of His hand," for the unerring test of CHRIST's flock is laid down by Himself: "My sheep hear

Z.

Heb. iii. 13.  
S. Clem.  
Alex. Parzen.  
Origen.  
Agellius.

Hugo Card.  
S. John x.  
27.



My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." You call yourselves His sheep, prove your claim, then, by hearing His voice. And yet, as S. Bernard tells us, there is no difficulty at all in hearing it; on the contrary, the difficulty is to stop our ears effectually against it, so clear is it in enunciation, so constant in appeal. Yet there are many who do not hear, from divers causes: because they are far off; because they are deaf; because they sleep; because they turn their heads aside; because they stop their ears; because they hurry away to avoid hearing; because they are dead; all of them types of various forms and degrees of unbelief. In all these ways the Jews sinned in refusing to hear the voice of the LORD JESUS; in all these ways we too sin, when we refuse or delay repentance. Satan's counsel, observes S. Basil the Great, is "To-day for me, to-morrow for God;" whereas, in the words of another Saint, He that hath promised pardon to repentance, hath not promised to-morrow to the sinner. And thus the heathen counsel is better than Satan's:

S. Bernard.  
de Convers.  
ad cler. 2.

Hugo Card.

Ay.

De Baptismo.  
S. Greg.  
Mag.

Martial.  
Epig. lib. 1.

Sera nimis vita est crastina, vive hodie.

To-morrow's life is far too late, live thou to-day.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Deut. xxxii.  
2.

C.  
Ezek. xxxvi.  
26.

Job xli. 24.

L.  
De Muis.

Exod. xvii.  
7.

Aben-Ezra.  
Genebrardus.

Hugo Card.

*Harden not your hearts.* For in so doing, you set yourselves in direct opposition to the will of God, which is to soften those hearts, in that He said, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, My speech shall distil as the dew," to moisten the dry ground that it may bring forth the tender herb of grace; whereas it is said of sinners that their hearts are stony, and of Leviathan, the type of evil power, "His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone." *As in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation.* We should perhaps do better by taking the leading words here as proper names, and rendering, *As in Meribah, and as in the day of Massah.* Some commentators argue hence a double sin, and a possible division amongst the rebellious Jews, referring the word *provocation* to their resistance to the authority of Moses, and *temptation* to their unbelief in the providence of God. Cardinal Hugo points out that the words which follow, *in the wilderness*, are an aggravation of guilt, because it was exactly there, in the absence of all external help, all human aid, that the thoughts of the Jews should have been most unwaveringly directed to the God Who had so wonderfully brought them out of Egypt. He reminds us, too, that men who come out of the Egypt of sin or secularity, who begin a life of repentance or of monastic obligation, are at first *in the wilderness*, deserted by those they have left behind, not attaining yet to that they seek, and that in that stage of spiritual progress the risk of rebellion and unbelief in God is very great, the temptation to resist the pleadings of the HOLY GHOST incessant. *When*



*your fathers tempted Me.* There is a stress on *your fathers*, implying that we are the same people which sinned in a former period of its history, and are therefore likely to yield to our besetting error, and to sin again. And we may tempt God in several ways: His mercy, by indevout and careless prayer; His patience, by continuance in sin; His righteousness, by desiring unjust revenge; His power, by lack of trust in Him during perils; His wisdom, by undertaking to teach others without previous study and meditation. *Proved Me.* This is more than *tempting*, which denotes the bare experiment; whereas *proving* implies its too complete success, inasmuch as the God Whose power they doubted, slew them all in the wilderness. *And saw My works.* That is, although they saw them, and that during forty continuous years (which is the connection of the words in the Epistle to the Hebrews), yet they did not believe, and were never really subdued, but renewed their experiments after each miracle and each judgment.

Cocceus.

Ay.

Agellius.

L.

Ewald.

10 Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said: It is a people that do err in their hearts, for they have not known my ways.

This mode of reading the verse, which is that of the present Hebrew punctuation, is also that of the LXX. and Vulgate; while, as remarked above, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews joins on the words *forty years* to the previous verse, and inserts the word *wherefore* immediately after them, a reading which the Arabic version has adopted. There is, however, no real discrepancy between the two, since, on the one hand, the murmurings and rebellions of the Israelites were renewed at intervals during the whole time of their wanderings in the desert; and on the other, the wrath of God was continually provoked thereby. *Grieved* is hardly strong enough for *עָרַב*, nor is the Vulgate *offended* much better.

Heb. iii. 9.

10.

It ought rather to be *loathed*, implying their obstinate persistency in the foulness of sin, so as to inspire God's purity with disgust. The Roman Psalter has here a variant, *I was close*, (proximus)<sup>1</sup> to this generation. Most of the commentators take this as meaning close in the sense that one who punishes is near the criminal, or as a teacher keeps beside an idle and refractory pupil, to compel his attention to his tasks. However, S. Augustine explains it differently, of God's continual presence in signs and miracles; while S. Bernard interprets it of an inward voice and inspiration. The ordinary reading exhibits to us the effect of God's anger; but this one supplies the cause; the ingratitude of the children of Israel

Alcin.  
The Gloss.  
Genebrardus.  
Titelman.

A.  
S. Bernard.  
de Convers.  
ii.  
Ric. Cenom.

<sup>1</sup> From taking the LXX. *πρὸς ἑχθρὰς* as if derived from *ἐχθρά*, and meaning "putting close to shore."



for God's unceasing watch over them. They do not fail to point out the mystical import of the number *forty*, repeated in the fasts of Elijah and of our LORD, and in the great forty days after Easter; and they tell us that as ten is the first limit we meet in computation, so that this number and its multiples give all the subsequent names to sums, it serves as the type of fulness; while *four*, as denoting either the seasons of the year or the quarters of the heavens, extends that fulness to all time and place, and thus *forty years* stand here for the entire of our earthly sojourn. One reminds us that there is a stress on *years*, because the journey of Elijah teaches us that the Israelites could have passed through the desert in *forty days*, had they only been obedient. And whereas *this generation* applies literally to the six hundred thousand who came up out of Egypt, and then by accommodation to all living men at any time while it is called To-day, there is also a special fitness in taking it of the Jews after the Passion of CHRIST; for the interval which lay between that and the final destruction of Jerusalem was almost precisely forty years, up to which time the door of hope was still open for Israel, and it was still *to-day*, ere that terrible night set upon the Temple worship. *They do always err in their heart*. It is even stronger in the Hebrew, *They are ever wanderers in heart*. It is a great deal more forcibly said, observes a mediæval commentator, than if it were, *They err in their act*, for the error of an act has a definite end, whereas the error of the will has no end. Death, at any rate, puts an end to the evil-doing of a sinner, not because he has lost the will to sin, but because he has no longer the power to do so. *For they have not known My ways*. The word *known* does not here signify that acquaintance with God's ways which may be gathered from reading or meditation, but only the knowledge which comes of assiduous walking in the ways themselves, that is, practical holiness and well-doing. And the *ways* of God are all reducible to one, that is, CHRIST JESUS Himself, "the Way, and the Truth, and the Life;" moreover, they all lead to the same heavenly country. They are one way in their construction, in their king, in their goal; they are many ways according to the diversities of the operations of grace, according to the variety of callings and temperaments amongst those who journey home through the wilderness.

11 Unto whom I swear in my wrath : that they should not enter into my rest.

Numb. xiv.  
26.

This He did when the spies brought back the evil report of the Land of Promise, and the congregation prepared to elect a leader to bring them back into Egypt. It is a terrible alarm, comments S. Augustine. We began with rejoicing, but the Psalm ends with awful dread. It is a great thing that God should speak, how much more that God should

A.

R.  
1 Kings  
xix. 8.

Cocceius.  
P.

Hugo Card.

Z.

S. Bonaven-  
tura.

Hugo Card.



swear! Thou hast reason to fear a man who hath sworn, lest he should, for his oath's sake, do aught against his will, how much more to fear God, Who cannot swear rashly. Let no one say in his heart, That which He promiseth is true, that which He threatens is false. As certain as thou oughtest to be of rest, happiness, eternity, immortality, if thou keep His commandments, so certain shouldst thou be of destruction, of the burning of everlasting fire, of damnation with the devil, if thou despise God's commandments. He hath sworn that these shall not enter into His rest, and yet "it remaineth that some must enter therein," for it could not be designed for no occupant. And this *rest* which meant the earthly Canaan to the Jews of old, means for us that Sabbathism of the heavenly country whereof the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us. Even here on earth, before reaching that blessed land, there remaineth a rest for the people of God, whereof the weekly festival is a type and pledge. There is the rest from sin, common to all the righteous, and the rest from bodily cares and temptations, achieved by the contemplative Saints, while, crowning all, is the rest of the blessed, whence all sorrow is banished for evermore. "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief," and be included under the terrible oath of exclusion; and in prayer for grace that it may not be so, "O come, let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the LORD our Maker."

Heb. iv. 9.

Ay.

Heb. iv. 11.

D. C.

Wherefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, the Great King above all gods; glory be to the SON, the Strength of our salvation; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who saith, To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.

Heb. iii. 7.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

O God, the glorious salvation of all people, graciously look upon the sheep of Thy pasture, and bestowing upon them the salt of prudence, vouchsafe to bring them unhurt into everlasting rest. (5.)

Ludolph.

Coming before Thy face, O LORD, with confession, and rejoicing in psalms unto Thee with fitting melody, we worship and fall down before Thee, beseeching Thee with inward weeping and sighing, that as Thou hast made us, and art our God, Thou wouldst as a merciful LORD protect Thy people, and as a careful Shepherd tend the sheep of Thy pasture, and grant grace to them for whom Thou didst lay down Thy life. (11.)

Mozarabic.

O LORD, Who wast close unto Thy people for the number of forty years, grant unto Thy Church which Thou hast purchased with the price of Thy Blood, that she may not err in

Mozarabic.



heart, but fill her with the flooding of the HOLY GHOST, and join her unto Thee in everlasting blessedness. (11.)  
 D. C. By the gift of Thy bounty, let us rejoice and be glad in Thee, O God of our salvation, and obtain from Thee the blessing of continual peace; grant that we may know Thy way, and passing through it, may, as Thou hast sworn, enter into Thy rest. (1.)

## PSALM XCVI.

**TITLE.** LXX. and Vulgate: A Song of David, when the house was built after the captivity.

### ARGUMENT.

**ARG. THOMAS.** That CHRIST, reigning from the Tree among the nations, is to be shown in His second coming. The Voice of the Apostles to the people, and concerning the confusion of the idols and the calling of the Church. The Voice of the Church calling. The Prophet, touching the first and second coming of CHRIST.

**VEN. BEDÆ.** As to the letter, the time signifies that when the Temple was restored at Jerusalem on the loosing of the Babylonian captivity. But spiritually the destroyed *house is built* when *after the captivity* of sin, the soul recovers the way of truth. For that *house*, to wit, the Church universal, wherein CHRIST dwells, is always being built up with living stones, until the number of the elect shall be fulfilled at the end of the world.

In the first part of the Psalm the Prophet exhorts the general body to sing unto the LORD, and to preach the coming of the LORD's Incarnation throughout the world, because He is Very LORD above all Gods. *O sing unto the Lord, &c.* In the second place, he warns the various nations first to offer themselves, then to discharge the office of preaching, and he makes mention of both comings of the LORD, as well that wherein He was judged by the world, as that wherein He is to judge the world. *Ascribe unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people.*

**EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA.** The Calling of the Gentiles, and the Coming of CHRIST.

**S. ATHANASIUS.** A Psalm of counsel, and, as it were, of command.

### VARIOUS USES.

**Gregorian.** Friday: Matins. [Christmas Day: II. Nocturn. Circumcision: II. Nocturn. Epiphany, Trinity Sunday, Holy Name, Invention and Exaltation of the Cross, Sacred Heart, Feasts B.V.M., Michaelmas Day, Comm. of Virgins, Dedication of Church: III. Nocturn.]

**Monastic.** Friday: II. Nocturn. [As *Gregorian*, and also Ascension Day and Pentecost: II. Nocturn.]

**Ambrosian.** Thursday of Second Week: II. Nocturn.



*Parisian.* Monday: Terce. [Christmas Day and Epiphany: III. Nocturn.]

*Lyons.* Saturday: Lauds. [Epiphany: III. Nocturn.]

*Quignon.* Sunday: Lauds.

## ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* Sing \* unto the LORD, and praise His Name. [Christmas Day: Let the heavens rejoice \* and let the earth be glad before the LORD, for He cometh. Circumcision: Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the face of the LORD, for He cometh. Epiphany: Worship the LORD \* Alleluia: in His holy hall. Alleluia. Trinity Sunday: The FATHER is love; the SON is grace; the HOLY SPIRIT is communion, O Blessed Trinity. Holy Name: Sing unto the LORD, and praise His Name,\* be telling of His salvation from day to day. Feasts of the Cross: We adore Thee, O CHRIST, and bless Thee, \* because by Thy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world. Sacred Heart: Be telling of His salvation from day to day. Feasts B. V. M.: Rejoice, O Virgin Mary \* thou only hast slain all heresies throughout the world. Michaelmas Day: Michael, the Archangelic Angel, messenger of GOD for righteous souls. Alleluia. Comm. of Virgins: I am black\* but comely, O daughters of Jerusalem, therefore the King loved me, and brought me into His chamber. Dedication: The temple of the LORD \* is holy, it is GOD's structure, it is GOD's building.]

*Monastic.* As *Gregorian.* [Ascension Day: Let the heavens rejoice \* and let the earth be glad, for the LORD cometh. Alleluia. Dedication: Jacob set up a stone for a pillar \* pouring oil upon it.]

*Ambrosian.* As preceding Psalm.

*Parisian.* Bring offerings \* and worship the LORD, for He hath corrected the round world. [Christmas Day: As *Gregorian.* Epiphany: Declare His honour unto the heathen \* and His wonders unto all people.]

*Lyons.* As *Gregorian.*

*Mozarabic.* Tell the good tidings \* from day to day, of the salvation of the LORD.

1 O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the whole earth.

This *new song*, framed, as the LXX. title informs us, for Agellius. the ceremony of dedicating the Second Temple after the Captivity, is a simple recasting of the latter part of David's own psalm for the bringing up of the Ark out of the house of <sup>1 Chron.</sup> <sup>xvi. 23.</sup>

Obed-Edom to the tabernacle in Jerusalem. The alterations are very slight, and do not introduce any fresh ideas, and the absence of any special reference in the earlier draft of it to the Ark, or in this to the new building, has led the Rabbins to interpret it of a yet future Temple to be erected by Messiah Himself; which accords precisely with the spiritual application to the kingdom of CHRIST insisted on by the early Christian expositors on precisely the same grounds. S. Chrysostom applies it directly to the Church Militant, other Greek

R. Shelomo.  
S. Ambrose.

A.

S. Chrysost.  
S. Basil. M.



- Theodore. Fathers to the two comings of CHRIST, but the majority agree in taking it of the gradual rise in the heavens of that building of lively stones, made without hands, eternal, the Church Triumphant. This is the City of GOD, which rises, like the walls of Thebes in the Grecian legend, to the sound of sweet music; built up with song, founded on belief, raised high by hope, completed in love, dedicated at the end of the world. The Targum assumes the Psalmist to address the heavenly spirits, inasmuch as it adds the words *exalted Angels* to the first half of the verse. Hence Christian expositors have seen here a call for that burst of *new song* which was heard by the shepherds of Bethlehem on the morning of the Nativity; and that, whereas it was not possible, it may be not lawful, for the Jew to sing any of the old songs of the LORD in a strange land, this new song, unrestrained by any such scruple or precept, was to be chanted in every quarter of the globe, by every nation of the world, wherefore is added, *Sing unto the Lord, all the whole earth*. It is a *new song* for all us Gentiles, in that we sing the song of Baptism, which brings us regeneration; of repentance, which cleanses us afresh when we fall; of glory yet to come, when all things shall be made new. It is *new*, in celebrating the Incarnation, because then God created a new thing, in that a woman compassed a man. Our old songs were those of pride, of gluttony, of luxury, in hope of gain, prosperity, or harm to others; our new song is of praise, reverence, and obedience, and love of God, in newness of life, in the spirit that quickeneth, no longer in the letter that killeth, but keepeth that new commandment, that we love one another, not with the narrow patriotism and fellow-feeling of a small tribe, or a mere national Church, but with a citizenship which embraces *all the whole earth*.
- R.
- Hugo Card.  
S. Max.  
Taor.  
Jer. xxxi. 22.  
Philip de la  
Grève.  
Serm. 203.  
D. C.  
S. Irenæus.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.  
S. John xiii.  
34.  
Optatus  
Milev. 3  
cont. Parm.  
R.

2 Sing unto the LORD, and praise his Name : be telling of his salvation from day to day.

- C. In this triple injunction to *sing unto the Lord*, they bid us see the worship of the Blessed Trinity, and one further tells us to note that there are, moreover, just three *new songs* in the Gospel, added to the ancient Psalter and Canticles; the Benedictus, Magnificat, and Nunc Dimittis, daily sung in the Church. *And praise His Name*. Herein the Unity of Essence is denoted, as the Trinity of Persons by the threefold mention of the LORD which precedes. So in the Breviary Preces at Compline we have the V. "Let us bless the FATHER, and the SON, with the HOLY GHOST," followed by the R. "Let us praise and highly exalt Him for ever." It is not enough to *sing*, unless we also *bless* the LORD's Name, for it is possible to have songs wherein that Name is mentioned without reverence or love. We *bless* His Name by a pure and holy life, because thereby we make His honour known to aliens, and bring them to submit themselves to His sway;
- Haymo.  
Hugo Card.  
R.  
Brev. Rom.  
Hugo Card.  
Haymo.



and it may be that here only His *Name*, and not Himself in very deed is specified, because the WORD was not yet made flesh; and in that case the Name we are bidden to praise is that holy one, JESUS. *Be telling of His salvation.* The LXX. using here the specific term *εὐαγγελίζεσθε*, evangelize, preach the Gospel, and the Roman Psalter, rendering this as closely as it can, *bene nunciate*, fix definitely for us the spiritual meaning of the verse, as directed first to the Apostles, and then to all preachers of the kingdom of CHRIST. And as we have the Holy Name itself hid for us in the Hebrew word here for *His salvation* *יְשׁוּעָתוֹ*, we can be at no loss to tell what is that salvation, or as the Chaldee reads, that *redemption*, which is to be preached. *From day to day.* For He is Light of Light, Very God of Very God; so that when we preach the FATHER truly, we must preach the SON, and when we preach the SON, must preach the FATHER. Praise the LORD JESUS always in the light of the *day*, not in the darkness of sin, but in the brightness of virtue. Let Him, the Sun of Righteousness, always rise in thy soul, that the new light may ever spring up in thee. Praise Him *from day to day*, in the Old Testament and in the New, two days which make one light, in both of which He shines. Praise Him not in the Old alone, like Jews, nor in the New alone, like Manichees, but remember that the Apostles went out two by two as preachers of His Gospel. Praise Him from strength to strength, from one bright lesson of power and holiness to another yet brighter, pressing on in the way of salvation, lest when ye have preached to others, ye become yourselves castaways; praise Him, and tell of His salvation, literally, each day as it comes, that none may rise and set without His kingdom being extended; praise Him from the day of the Gospel to the yet brighter day of the Resurrection.

Ay.  
Z.

The Gloss.  
Hugo Card.

Targum.  
S. Max.  
de Nativ.  
S. Beda  
Ven. de  
Nativ.  
Hom. 1.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.

R.  
S. Mark vi.  
7.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.

1 Cor. ix. 27.

3 Declare his honour unto the heathen : and his wonders unto all people.

Some will have it that *honour*, or rather *glory*, as A.V., LXX., and Vulg., here denotes the Godhead of CHRIST, as *salvation* tells us of the work of His Manhood; but the more usual exposition, from S. Justin Martyr downwards, has been of the Passion, wherein the hour came that the Son of Man was glorified, that His people might thenceforth glory in nothing save His Cross. The *wonders* of which the Psalmist speaks are not only the miracles of healing and other works of CHRIST recorded in the Gospels, but more especially His Incarnation, Resurrection, and Ascension. And one who was himself a great preacher draws three salutary lessons for preachers from this verse. It is *His* Glory which should be proclaimed, not the learning, ability, and eloquence of the orator who professes to speak for Him; it is *His glory*, the

Honorius.

Dial. c.  
Tryphon. 74.  
Z.  
S. John xii.  
23.  
Galat. vi. 14.

Hugo Card.



loving beauty, the attractiveness of His Gospel, the lavish promises to repentant sinners, the blessedness of heaven which should be the chief themes of discourse; not threats, menaces, sermons on hell and torment, to affright men, and at best make them God's trembling slaves, not His loving friends. The preaching is to be *unto all people*, in obscure country districts, amongst unpolished and illiterate congregations, and not to be confined, as fashionable preachers like to confine it, to the cultivated and critical audiences of the capital.

4 For the LORD is great, and cannot worthily be praised : he is more to be feared than all gods.

- A. It is of that LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who came to us as a little Child, that these words are spoken. Despise Him not when little, understand how great He is. He became little, because ye were little; but let His greatness be understood, and you shall become great in Him. So uprises the building of the House, so the very stones for the edifice increase and are lifted up. *Cannot worthily be praised.* The Hebrew is simply, *greatly to be praised*; but the Prayer Book here is trying to render the force of the Vulgate, *laudabilis nimis*, that is, praiseworthy, *too much* for our faculties; for what, asks S. Augustine, can a little tongue do towards praising the Great One? In saying *too much*, he suggests the thought, Ponder what I cannot utter, and when thou hast pondered, it will be all too little. "O LORD," exclaims S. Anselm, "Thou art not only He than Whom no greater can be the object of thought, but Thou art something which is greater than any thought." And therefore *He is to be feared above all gods*, which are but the creatures of man's thoughts, those idols of the heathen which He can overthrow, or those earthly potentates whom He sets up and pulls down at His will.
- Prosolog. 15.
- Genebrardus.

5 As for all the gods of the heathen, they are but idols : but it is the LORD that made the heavens.

- Idols.* The literal Hebrew אֱלִילִים is *nothings*, (Symm. ἀνάρητος) mere phantasms having no real existence. And so the Apostle: "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one." But the LXX. and Vulgate translate it *demons*, a word implying less dignity than that of a God, and therefore suited to the graven images, the deified men, and the sacred animals of heathenism; implying besides the notion of evil and fraud, as connected with the ancient oracles, which has been bound up with that word ever since the proclamation of Christianity. *But it is the Lord that made the heavens*: a claim on behalf of His Almighty power exceeding that made for their divi-
- 1 Cor. viii. 4.
- D. C.
- Honorius.



nities by any of the heathen nations known to the ancient Jews; inasmuch as they either accepted the heaven as itself a god, or left its origin shrouded in doubt, unable as they were to rise to the height of conceiving God as the Creator of the universe. Mystically they explain, as usual, the *heavens* in this verse to denote the Apostles, and other holy preachers, superior in spiritual might to the evil spirits against which they contend.

C.

6 Glory and worship are before him : power and honour are in his sanctuary.

As the previous verse told us of the supreme power of God, so this one speaks of the regal pomp and dignity which attends Him, either in His heavenly court, where He is encompassed by the shining ranks of the angelic hierarchy, or in His earthly Temple, with its rich gifts and stately ceremonial. The Vulgate turns the words a little differently, so as to give room for additional matter of reflection: *Confession and beauty are in His sight, holiness and magnificence in His sanctification*. And S. Augustine, taking the first word as signifying acknowledgment of sin, points out how it precedes *beauty*, how it is the washing and purifying of a disfigured face, necessary before we can recognize the true grace of the features, or loveliness of the complexion. He also bids us observe how *holiness*, as the only way to heaven, is the precursor of *magnificence*, which can be attained there alone in His *sanctification*, that is, amongst the glorified Saints; whereas those who seek to be magnificent first, and without holiness, do but fall into destruction. In our Country, there are in full perfection that *confession* of God's praise and glory which we make so imperfectly here in the way, and that inner *beauty* of soul which is now marred and defaced by sin; because *in His sight*, in the Beatific Vision, there can be nothing defective, since the *holiness* and *magnificence* thereof surpass all words and imagination. A further meaning, closer to the letter, is the absence in the Gospel rites not only of the obscenities which attended the worship of many heathen deities, but also of the grossness and coarseness which necessarily beset even the sacrifices of the Law, making a shambles of the very Temple itself, that *sanctuary* which the Psalmist here lauds. This word, it may be noted in passing, is one of the chief variations from the first draught of the Psalm by David, wherein, as there was as yet no fixed Temple, we find only the term *place*. Two other explanations of the sanctuary, closely akin to each other, see in it the human Body of the LORD JESUS, endowed with spotless purity and miraculous power; or the bodies of His Saints, hallowed by His indwelling and that of the HOLY GHOST, and thus showing, in their degree, those attributes of His humanity. Euthymius, explaining the words of any

Agellius.

Bellarmine.

A.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

D. C.

Ay.

Delitzsch.  
1 Chron.  
xvi. 27.Anon. Græc.  
ap.Cd.  
Titelman.



- Z. Christian churches dedicated to the service of God, reminds us of the cleanliness, purity, and costliness which befit them, an interpretation which agrees with the version of Apollinarius here :

την ἀκραιφνήν καὶ ἀριστερὴν ἡμεῖς εὐχόμεθα.

Pureness and stately glory fit His shrine.

7 Ascribe unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people : ascribe unto the LORD worship and power.

8 Ascribe unto the LORD the honour due unto his Name : bring presents, and come unto his courts.

- C. There is a peculiar force, observes an early commentator, in this phrase, *kindreds of the people*, much more than if we had the word *peoples* alone ; for in every nation there are at all times strangers, aliens, sojourners abiding permanently or for a time, but not reckoned amongst the natives ; while the phrase here includes all such, and provides that no one shall be shut out because of his origin. And as it was the custom of the Jews to come up on great festivals to the Temple in Jerusalem, literally divided into companies according to their tribes, so all the nations of the world are to do the like spiritually, by flocking into the Church of CHRIST, and that with the triple ascription of glory and worship to the Eternal Trinity, as in the song of the redeemed in the Apocalypse. The kindreds of the people heard and obeyed this call, when in the Epiphany the wise men ascribed *glory* to their God, offering Him frankincense, *power* to their King,

Bellarmino.

Z.  
Rev. iv. 11,  
v. 12.

Hugo Card.

Josh. vii. 19.

with gold, *honour* to the mighty dead, with myrrh for His embalming. We can do the like, in true repentance for our sins, giving *glory* to God by contrition, as it is written, " My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD GOD of Israel, and make confession unto Him ;" *power* by actual confession, made in the strength of God's grace, alone mighty enough to deliver us from the bonds of sin ; and *honour* in making satisfaction, fitly the honour of *His Name* (A.V.) because His credit is impeached when any of His professed followers fail in their duties. *Bring presents*. It is rather, *Take an offering*, the *minchah*, or unbloody sacrifice of fine flour. And for us this means two things : the oblation of the Holy Eucharist, the one sacrifice left when all others were abolished, and the living oblation of ourselves, our souls and bodies, the dedication of all our faculties and powers, the offering of prayer, confession, fasting, and almsgiving to God in *His courts*, that is, His local Churches here in earth, the Religious houses of His contemplative servants, or the inner recesses of our own hearts when we withdraw into silence and meditation.

Jansen.  
Gand.  
Mal. i. 11.

Z.  
Bellarmino.

Z.  
Hugo Card.

D. C.



9 O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness :  
let the whole earth stand in awe of him.

*In the beauty of holiness.* There are three interpretations of this clause. First is that of the A.V. margin, *in His glorious sanctuary*, which is practically identical with the LXX. and Vulgate, *holy court*; next, that it means bowing before His awful majesty, taking the words as descriptive of His attributes; thirdly, and most correctly, Worship the LORD in the *sacred vestments*, in the solemn attire of the priesthood. So we read of the High Priest, Simon Bar-Onias, "When he put on the robe of honour, and was clothed with the perfection of glory, when he went up to the holy altar, he made the garment of holiness honourable." And in calling on the Gentiles to act thus, the Psalmist does not merely foretell the ceremonial usages of the Church, but that mystery of which they are but the type, the being clothed with the gifts of the SPIRIT, and with the righteousness of CHRIST, our Great High Priest.

Accepting the first explanation, we are met by the contrast of the plural *courts* of the previous verse, and the one court of this, and of this they give us two expositions; that we pass from the many Patriarchs, seers, and Prophets of the Old Dispensation, each being but an imperfect type, to the fulfilment of all in the One Man Who is the tabernacle of God under the New Covenant; and that we pass from the outer courts, the Churches militant and local here on earth, into one vast sanctuary of the Church universal and triumphant in heaven. *Let all the earth stand in awe of Him.* This is a second proclamation of the herald, as the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving begins, that there may be no sound to break the solemn stillness of the rite. So we read in the Prophet, "The LORD is in His holy temple : let all the earth keep silence before Him." But the LXX. and Vulgate read, *Let all the earth be moved before His face.* And this is explained first of the stir and expectation which preceded the first coming of CHRIST, so that the world was moved and shaken from its deeply rooted error, and turned to the LORD; whereof the earthquake at the Crucifixion was a type. Then it is taken also of the second coming of CHRIST to judgment; and finally of the alarm raised in the souls of earthly and carnal sinners, and the thought of the wrath to come, so that they turn to repentance, in fear and trembling of heart.

Hupfeld.  
Cocceus.  
Kampfhau-  
sen.  
Ecclus. l. 11.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.

Honorius.  
Agellius.

Hab. ii. 20.

Z.

C.  
Haymo.  
R.

10 Tell it out among the heathen that the LORD  
is King : and that it is he that hath made the round  
world so fast that it cannot be moved ; and how that  
he shall judge the people righteously.

In the time of S. Justin Martyr, and for a long time sub-



Dial. c.      subsequently, the reading in the first member of this verse  
Tryphon. 73. was, *The Lord hath reigned from the Wood*, and that Saint  
explicitly charges the Jews with having quite recently cut  
out the latter words, as well as some expressions in Esra and  
Jeremiah, as being too distinctly prophetic of CHRIST.<sup>1</sup>  
Certain it is that while Tertullian, S. Cyprian, and Lactan-  
tius, as well as S. Augustine, adopted them, they were not to  
be found in the Hebrew MSS. which S. Jerome consulted,  
Genebrardus. and Genebrardus inclines to the view that they were a para-  
phrase introduced by the Seventy into the Greek text. The  
original reference, assuming their genuineness, was probably  
to the wood of the Ark of the Covenant, from which went  
forth the might which overthrew Dagon, the Philistine idol,  
and brought about the restoration of the Ark itself to Israel.  
The later reference, to the Cross, is embodied by the Church  
in the Passiontide hymn :

S. Venant.  
Fortunat.  
The Hymn,  
*Vesilla*  
*Regis.*

Fulfilled is all that David told  
In true prophetic song of old ;  
Amidst the nations God, saith he,  
Hath reigned and triumphed from the Tree.

Anon. Græc. It was *amongst the heathen* that these tidings were to be  
spread, as the Jews refused to hear them ; and the procla-  
mation of the LORD as King denotes not the beginning of  
His power and rule, but the recognition of it in faith and  
Genebrardus. worship by His new subjects. And observe that it was a  
heathen governor who made this proclamation by the very  
form of that title which he set up on the Cross, in despite of  
the remonstrances of the Jews, *He hath made the round*  
L. *world so fast that it cannot be moved*. They agree in explain-  
ing this of that Church which is firm and steadfast, because  
Cd. founded on Himself, the Rock. The LXX. and Vulgate  
Cocceius. read *He hath righted* (LXX.) or *corrected* (Vulg.) *the round*  
world ; whence they argue that the Psalmist does not here  
Didymus. speak of the first creation of nature, but of the new creation  
S. Bruno of grace, whereby that which had been injured was corrected  
Carth. and made good anew ; that which was out of shape brought  
Pseudo- into a perfect sphere. CHRIST came that He might correct  
Hieron. mankind (aforetime corrupted,) that it might never be moved.  
His Cross is the pillar of mankind, and on that pillar His

<sup>1</sup> Otto, in his edition of S. Justin, traverses this statement, and alleges, without a particle of evidence, that the words are a Christian interpolation, not a Jewish excision. The preciseness of another of S. Justin's charges, that they had in some synagogues cut out Jer. xi. 19,

but that it was retained in other copies, seems to establish the accuracy of his information, especially as he expressly says that he will quote no instances of the kind which all the Jews agree in denying, but only such as he can conclusively prove.



house is reared; that house which is built on the foundation of those Apostles whom He corrected, after their doubt, by His Resurrection, and established firmly by the HOLY GHOST at Pentecost, so that they were never moved again. *He shall judge the people righteously.* It is not spoken of the Second Coming only, but of the first also, as the words denote the whole course of CHRIST'S providential government, the absolute righteousness of the laws which He has laid down in the Gospel for the guidance of mankind.

Hugo Card.  
L.

Bellarmino.

11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad : let the sea make a noise, and all that therein is.

12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it : then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the LORD.

The Chaldee explains the first clause, Let the Angelic hosts rejoice, and the righteous upon earth be glad; and a favourite Christian explanation sees in the *heavens* the Apostles and other Gospel preachers, and in the *earth* their hearers thirstily drinking in the rain of doctrine; while the *sea* denotes sinners, restless, bitter, and barren, and the *fulness* (A.V.) of it the proud and wealthy, who despise the Gospel. The *field* is the precise contrast to the sea, being level, stable, fruitful, and thus a type of the lowly Saints who are diligent in good works, and especially the first Jewish converts, as already brought unto salvation, while the *trees of the wood* are the yet unreclaimed and wild stocks of the Gentiles. The heavens rejoiced at the Nativity of CHRIST, because of His Divine nature, and showed their gladness by the shining of a star and the songs of the Angels; the *earth* was glad because of His Manhood; the *sea*, and all waters, because of their hallowing as the medium of Baptism, the *fields*, because of His presence in

Targum.

Hugo Card.  
Arnobius.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

Z.  
Ay.

those holy fields

Over whose acres walked those blessed feet  
Which 'eighteen' hundred years ago were nailed  
For our advantage on the bitter Cross;

Henry IV.,  
l. 1.

while *all the trees of the wood* rejoiced in that one of them was to be wrought into the instrument of man's redemption. And after all, there is no better interpretation of the words than the literal one, which sees the exultation of the universe in the appearing of its Creator, as we read in that marvellous, yet unconscious Gentile prophecy of His Nativity :

Aspice, convexo nutantem pondere mundum,  
Terrasque, tractusque maris cœlumque profundum :  
Aspice, venturo latentur ut omnia sæclo.

Virg. Eclog.  
iv. 50.



See the world nodding with its convex weight,  
The lands, the sweeps of sea, the vaulted sky :  
See how all things in this new time are glad.

The same idea recurs in many hymns, especially for Paschal-tide, culminating in the Alleluistic Sequence. Here is an example, less beautiful, but also less known :

The Hymn,  
*His noctes,*  
*its nubes.*

Away, O night, away, O cloud,  
Ye stars of mourning, flee away ;  
Let heaven and earth rejoice aloud,  
And depths beneath as well as they ;  
Let air and water join their voice,  
And all the finny tribes rejoice.

Let praise be heard from woods and fields,  
And from the groves with joyance gay ;  
Let all things that the meadow yields  
Blend with the laud glad rivers pay ;  
Let hills and vales the strain prolong,  
Buds, flowers and fountains, swell the song.

Let praise by rocks and floods be paid,  
And all things CHRIST the LORD extol,  
Our foes and barriers low are laid,  
And conquered Hell bewails its fall ;  
The broken bar gives joy to earth,  
And all the Fathers join her mirth.

13 For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth : and with righteousness to judge the world, and the people with his truth.

Theodoret.  
S. Basil. M.

Titelman.

Z.

D. C.

Cocceius.

In the twofold use of the words *He cometh*, they see a reference to both Advents of CHRIST, that in which He came to judge between us and the enemy who held us in bondage, against whom He gave sentence, casting the prince of this world out ; and that wherein He shall come again for the distribution of rewards and punishments, according as His conditions of salvation have been accepted or rejected. Some too distinguish between the *world* and the *people*, as denoting Gentiles and Jews. He will judge in *righteousness*, as without any partiality or acceptance of persons, and *in truth*, because He knows all things, and cannot be deceived ; and yet more, because He fulfils His true promises made to His people, who shall be received into everlasting glory when the world is judged, and will therefore rejoice before the LORD, flourishing as green olive-trees, no longer in the wild wood, but in the Paradise of heavenly bliss.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is more to be feared than



all gods; glory be to the SON, Who reigneth from the Tree; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the beauty of the holiness of God.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

## COLLECTS.

O God, the Maker of heaven, Creator of earth, to Whom Ludolph. all the earth payeth the melody of a new song, we beseech Thee, that as we humbly confess Thee reigning from the Tree, so leaving behind us all Gentile error, we may with keen perception await the glory of Thy future coming. (5.)

O God, Maker of heaven, and Creator of earth, to Whom Ludolph. all the earth payeth the melody of a new song, we pray Thee, that Thy people, obedient unto Thee, may persevere in righteousness and truth, and that we who have sinned through negligence may be mercifully corrected by Thee. (1.)

Let all the earth sing a new song unto Thee, O LORD, be- Mozarabic. cause Thou hast redeemed the whole world through the Blood of Thy SON our LORD JESUS CHRIST; so that we, who are buried with Him in His death, may rejoice together with Him in unbounded joy. (11.)

Let the multitude of the redeemed sing unto Thee. Thou Mozarabic. hast wrought new wonders; new light hath sprung forth from the Virgin; which, however, was not new unto the Godhead, but was new in the display of an unwonted marvel, the new mystery of regeneration, whereby Thou renewest the world; new kinds of power in the healing of the sick, a new mode of humility and patience amidst the pride of the oppressors, a new and wondrous kind of power in the glory of the Resurrection, a new exercise of Thy Majesty displayed to human sight, when Thou borest very Man to the heights of heaven. Grant, on behalf of them for whom Thou, O glorious Artist, hast wrought such new marvels, that they may be followers of Thy steps and co-heirs of Thy glory, and that Thou wouldst mingle our voices with the applaudings of the Saints in the melody of song. (11.)

O God, Who hast made the heavens, and art terrible above all gods; grant that we, with the help of Thy mercy, may appease Thy face with the beauty of confession, that purified from the defilement of our sins, we may with pure mind and voice alway sing unto Thee, O LORD. (1.) D. C.



## PSALM XCVII.

**TITLE.** LXX. : To David, when his land was constituted. Vulgate : To this David, when his land was restored.

**ARGUMENT.**

**ARG. THOMAS.** That CHRIST, proclaimed by the voices of the heavens, is shown to the nations in the flesh. The Voice of the Church concerning the Advent of CHRIST. For Praise. A Prophecy. The Voice of the Church concerning the Advent of CHRIST, or the Voice of the Apostles to believers. A Prophecy touching the future condemnation of the ungodly, and glorifying of the righteous. The pomp of GOD as King is described. The Voice of the Church at the Advent of the LORD.

**VEN. BEDE.** *To David himself*, is referred to CHRIST : and *the land restored* is understood as either the Resurrection of the flesh which He took of the Virgin, or any sinners who return to Him after their sins ; as was done in the case of those Jews who washed away with penitence the sacrilege of the LORD's Crucifixion.

In the first portion of the Psalm, the Prophet, describing the powers of the LORD in His Resurrection by various modes of proclamation, chides the worshippers of idols with merited rebuke. *The Lord is King, the earth may be glad.* Secondly, he directs his words to the LORD, rejoicing that the Church believes in her Author, and exhorting the faithful to rejoice in the LORD, because He is wont to deliver them from the oppression of the ungodly. *Sion heard of it and rejoiced.*

**SYRIAC PSALTER.** Of David. He foretells in it the Advent of CHRIST, and also hints at His last appearing.

**EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA.** A hymn of the Kingdom of CHRIST, concerning His Second Coming.

**S. ATHANASIUS.** A Psalm of Exhortation, as it were of command, and of glorying in the LORD.

**VARIOUS USES.**

**Gregorian.** Friday : Matins. [Circumcision, Epiphany, Holy Name, Ascension, Transfiguration, Trinity Sunday, Invention and Exaltation of the Cross, Five Wounds, Nails and Spear, Sacred Heart, Feasts B.V.M., Michaelmas Day, All Saints, Common of Apostles, and Common of Virgins : III. Nocturn.]

**Monastic.** As *Gregorian*. [Christmas Day, and as *Gregorian*.]

**Ambrosian.** Thursday of Second Week : II. Nocturn. [Christmas Day : II. Nocturn. Circumcision : Matins. Epiphany : III. Nocturn. Easter Eve : Matins.]

**Parisian.** Tuesday : Lauds. [Christmas Day : III. Nocturn. Epiphany : III. Nocturn.]

**Lyons.** Saturday : Terce.

**Quignon.** Tuesday : Nones.



## ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* As preceding Psalm. [Circumcision: In the beginning, and before the worlds, the WORD was GOD, \* and He is born to-day the SAVIOUR of the world. Epiphany: Worship GOD. Alleluia, \* all ye Angels of His, Alleluia. Ascension: He is exalted, Alleluia, \* far above all gods, Alleluia. Trinity Sunday: The FATHER is true, the SON is truth, the HOLY GHOST is truth. O Blessed Trinity. Transfiguration: There is sprung up a light for the Righteous, \* and joyful gladness for such as are true-hearted. Holy Name: According to Thy Name, O LORD, so is Thy praise unto the world's end: Thy right hand is full of righteousness. Sacred Heart: Worship Him, all ye Angels of His, \* Sion heard of it, and rejoiced. Feasts B.V.M.: Grant that I may praise thee, O hallowed Virgin; give me strength against thy foes. Michaelmas Day: There was given unto him much incense, that he might burn it upon the golden altar, which is before the eyes of the LORD. All Saints: O ye that love the LORD, rejoice in the LORD, and give thanks for a remembrance of His holiness. Common of Apostles: There is sprung up a light for the righteous, Alleluia, \* and joyful gladness for such as are true-hearted, Alleluia. Common of Virgins: Draw me after Thee, \* we will run after the savour of Thine ointments. Thy Name is as ointment poured out.]

*Monastic.* As *Gregorian*. [Christmas Day, as Circumcision. Trinity Sunday: In the FATHER abideth eternity, in the SON equality, in the HOLY GHOST the union of eternity and equality.]

*Ambrosian.* As Psalm xcv. [Christmas Day and Epiphany: The heavens have declared \* the righteousness of the LORD: and all the people have seen His glory. Kyr. Kyr. Kyr. Circumcision: Confounded be all \* they that worship carved images, and that delight in vain gods. Kyr. Kyr. Kyr. Easter Eve: Horror hath come upon the heavens, day hath fled into night, the moon is darkened with the colour of blood.]

*Parisian.* O ye that love the LORD, \* see that ye hate the thing that is evil: the LORD preserveth the souls of His Saints. [Christmas Day: There is sprung up a light for the righteous, \* and joyful gladness for such as are true-hearted. Epiphany: The heavens have declared His righteousness, and all the people have seen His glory.]

*Mozarabic.* First verse.

1 The LORD is King, the earth may be glad thereof: yea, the multitude of the isles may be glad thereof.

This Psalm as one of the post-Captivity series, begins with a glad proclamation of the restored sovereignty of God over Israel, displayed in the overthrow of the heathen power of Babylon, and the revival of the Temple worship. It declares that the LORD has shown Himself stronger than those kings of the earth who warred against Sion, so that His people, however threatened with any calamity by earthly tyrants, can with a sure confidence trust in a King mightier than any of

Agellius.

Bellarmino.



them. Hence its deeper spiritual meaning points to the kingdom of CHRIST, as manifested in His Nativity, and yet more in His Resurrection, when the yoke of the enemy of souls was broken off the neck of mankind; and to be manifested once again in greater power at His second Advent. *The earth may be glad thereof.* Not the narrow territory of Judæa alone, but the whole face of the world and all the dwellers therein. Tertullian explains the *earth* to denote especially the bodies of the Saints, to which such blessings come by reason of CHRIST's victory. Again, the phrase may stand for the whole body of the Church Militant here on earth now, of the Church Triumphant hereafter in the Land that is very far off. In this case, the *multitude of the isles*, literally denoting the islands of the Mediterranean Sea, (and perhaps also those of the Indian Ocean, standing for all unknown and heathen countries,) will here signify the local Churches, described as *isles*, because they are howled around by the waves of manifold temptation; yet just as an island, however it may be buffeted by the roaring billows, is not broken thereby, but rather breaks their force by its resistance: so the Churches of God which sprang up everywhere in the midst of persecutions raging about them, remained unbroken, and now rise high above the waters of a calm and glassy sea. S. Gregory the Great, taking the *earth*, the solid land, to denote the assembly of the teaching Church, the firm belief of the Doctors, explains the *isles* as the multitude of believing souls firm in the midst of a sea of troubles, parted from earth and its allurements. In the literal reference to the islands of the *Ægean* Sea, we may bear in mind that strange legend recorded by Eusebius, that at the moment when CHRIST died upon the Cross, a voice was heard from the Isle of Paxo, exclaiming in a loud voice, "Great Pan is dead," and that the pilot of a passing ship was commanded to make proclamation of these words at a certain point: whereupon a sound as of the wailing of a great multitude was heard, and the heathen oracles ceased.

E. B. Brown-  
ing, *The*  
*Dead Pan.*

'Twas the hour when One in Sion,  
Hung for love's sake on the Cross—  
When His brow was chill with dying,  
And His soul was faint with loss:  
When His priestly Blood dropped downward,  
And His kingly eyes looked throneward—  
Then, Pan was dead.

By the love He stood alone in,  
His sole Godhead rose complete;  
And the false gods fell down moaning,  
Each from off his golden seat—  
All the false gods with a cry  
Rendered up their deity—  
Pan, Pan was dead.



2 Clouds and darkness are round about him : righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his seat.

The first and obvious meaning of the earlier clause of the verse is the invisible majesty of God, Who dwelleth in light unapproachable, and whose revelation of Himself to Israel was first in the pillar of cloud, out of which He looked when He troubled the host of the Egyptians, and then when He gave the Law from Sinai in the midst of darkness and thunderings. On the mystical import of these *clouds and darkness*, themselves brighter and more resplendent than any natural light, the Pseudo-Dionysius dwells, as denoting, amidst much else, the abstraction from all earthly thoughts and sights which is necessary for perfect contemplation of the Divine glory; and that confession of our own ignorance and incapacity for comprehending the Infinite which is a necessary preliminary for our reception of any special revelation of God. They do not fail, however, to remind us that the Second Advent of CHRIST is to be in the clouds of heaven, even as was His Ascension, and that there is thus a second literal sense besides that referring to the earlier manifestations of God. Yet again, as He withdraws Himself from sinners, and refuses to show them His face, He is said in respect of them to be hidden in clouds and darkness. There are, besides, several mystical interpretations, which are conveniently summed up thus: "These clouds and darkness overshadowed the Church when the Law and the Prophets made CHRIST known to her. The clouds were also the Apostles, who filled the restored earth with their teaching; the darkness those wise men, who understanding deep mysteries, explained them to the Church. The cloud is also the Body of the LORD, wherein the Sun of Righteousness was hidden; the darkness, His concealed Godhead, which appeared not to eyes of flesh."

*Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His seat.* More exactly, the *basis* of His throne. (Aquila, ἱστῆμα, A. V. marg. *establishment*.) The direct meaning is, that when we have by faith and upward soaring penetrated the cloud of mystery which shrouds the Providence of God, we find absolute truth and justice to be the very foundation of all His doings. Thus, after Moses had sprinkled the blood of the Covenant, and when he went up into the clouds which shadowed Sinai, along with "Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: they saw the God of Israel: and under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in purity." For *habitation* the LXX. and Vulgate have *righting* or *correction*. And hence, while some have understood the words literally as denoting the perfect equity of CHRIST's judicial power in rewarding the just, and punishing the ungodly; others, taking the soul of each Saint to be God's throne, explain that this

Bellarmine.

Exod. xiv.  
24; xix. 16.Pseudo-  
Dionys. de  
Myst. Theol.  
1:

S. Maximus.

Lyranus.

Ay.

D. C.

A.

Honorius.

Didymus.

Exod. xxiv.  
9.Genebrardus.  
Bellarmine



S. Albertus  
Magnus.

throne is righted, and set straight by attentive consideration of His dealings with sinners, which serve as its warning and guidance.

3 There shall go a fire before him : and burn up his enemies on every side.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.

This is, they tell us for the most part, that fire which is to precede the Last Judgment, that which Daniel foresaw in vision, when the Ancient of Days did sit, and "a fiery stream issued and came forth before Him," of which S. Peter tells us that "the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." It will *burn up His enemies*, the wood, hay, stubble, but it will do no more than purify His Saints, the gold, silver, and precious stones reared on Him their foundation.

Dan. vii. 10.

2 S. Pet. iii. 10.

1 Cor. iii. 12, 13.

The Hymn,  
*Apparebit  
repentina.*

*Flamma ignis anteibit justi vultum Judicio,  
Cælum, terras et profundi fluctus ponti devorans.*

Flames of fire before the visage of the Righteous Judge shall go, Swallowing up the earth and heaven, and the ocean depths below.

A.

But S. Augustine takes it of the first Advent of CHRIST, and of the flame of anger and persecution kindled everywhere by the preaching of the Gospel, a flame which burnt up the persecutors themselves, and not the Evangelists against whom they raged, just as a torch applied to green wood is itself consumed without effecting its aim. There is besides these, more exactly still, that fire which CHRIST came to send upon the earth, the kindling blaze of the HOLY GHOST, which came down in tongues of fire at Pentecost, to burn freely throughout the world, for the destruction of obstinate unbelievers and the purifying of those who gladly received the Word.

S. Luke  
xii. 49.

Ezek. xxxix. 6.

Hugo Card.

And of this the Prophet spake, saying, "I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles : and they shall know that I am the LORD." This divine flame goes still before the face of the LORD in His coming to every faithful soul, as it kindles with longing for Him, and burns up all its sins therewith, as He heaps His coals of fire upon its head, to soften and purify it. "It must needs be," teaches a great Saint, "that the fervour of holy desire must go before His face to every soul to which He means to come, a flame which will burn up all the mildew of sin and make ready a place for the LORD. And then the soul knows that the LORD is at hand, when it feels itself kindled with that fire, and it saith with the Prophet, 'From above hath He sent fire unto my bones, and it prevaileth against them;' and again, 'My heart was hot within me, and at the last I spake with my tongue;' so that by the remission of sins, His aforetime *enemies* are kindled with love, and break forth in praise of His Name.

S. Bernard.  
Serm. in  
Cant. 31.

Ps. xxxix. 3.

Honorius.



4 His lightnings gave shine unto the world : the earth saw it, and was afraid.

Here again the literalist view sees a reference in the past to the thunderings of Sinai, and in the future to the words of S. Paul, that "the LORD JESUS shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty Angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST," a flame foreshown, as they remind us, by falling stars and other similar portents.

L.  
Genebrardus.  
2 Thess. i. 8.  
Lyranus.

But the mystical sense, referring to the preaching of the Apostles, those sons of thunder, to the clear shining and mingled threats and promises of the Gospel, to the awe which fell on the nations at the mighty words and miraculous power of the new preachers, is more widely followed. So the Paris Breviary in the Common of Apostles :

A.  
Z.

All full of Thy Godhead,  
While earth lieth still,  
They thunder, they lighten,  
The waters o'erflow.

Sant. Victor.  
The Hymn,  
Supreme  
guales  
Arbiter.

They thunder—their sound,  
It is CHRIST the LORD !  
Then Satan doth fear,  
His citadels fall :  
As when the dread trumpets  
Went forth at Thy word,  
And one long blast shattered  
The Canaanite's wall.

5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD : at the presence of the LORD of the whole earth.

So we read that when GOD came down to deliver the Law, "Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." They agree in the mystical sense, that the *hills* here denote all those eminent in station, influence, power, wealth, or ability; who will be either converted to the LORD, and become plastic and ductile in His hands, like pure and yielding wax, so as to receive readily the impress of His image upon their souls; or else be destroyed, as by an earthquake, before His face, according to that saying, "The everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow." In the good sense, a Saint points out that we have here a type of penitence, because the liquid form and level surface which wax assumes under heat fitly denote the tears and humility of a heart softened by the grace of GOD.

Exod. xix.  
18.  
Hugo Card.  
Ay.  
Hab. iii. 6.  
S. Laur.  
Justinian.  
Triumph.  
CHRISTI. 9.



6 The heavens have declared his righteousness :  
and all the people have seen his glory.

- L. The Angel carols at the Nativity, the Star of the Epiphany, the Voice at the Baptism and Transfiguration, the eclipse at the Crucifixion, the cloud of glory at the Ascension, the voices of the Apostles, all these *declared the righteousness of the Lord*; as Angels will again, uniting with the holy preachers of the Word, be the heralds of His second coming, when *all the people*, those nations of the earth who have already heard of His *glory*, as well as those who actually beheld Him working miracles in the flesh, shall see Him in His regal Majesty upon the judicial throne.
- A.

Ericus  
Abbas.

7 Confounded be all they that worship carved images, and that delight in vain gods : worship him, all ye gods.

- A. Has it not come to pass, asks S. Augustine, writing when the final overthrow of classical Paganism was fresh in the memory of living men, who had seen its last fierce struggle under Julian, its ignominious collapse when Eugenius was routed at Aquileia; were they not confounded, are they not confounded every day? Why are all they confounded that worship carved images? Because all the people have seen His glory. Now all the people confess the glory of CHRIST, and they who worship stones are ashamed, for those stones were dead ones, but we have found the Living stone. Nay, these stones were never alive, so that they cannot even be called dead, but our Stone is living, and hath ever been alive with the FATHER, and He died and lived again for us, and He lives now, and death shall have no more dominion over Him. The people know of this His glory, they abandon the temples, and hasten to the churches. So Theodoret tells us of S. Publia, the aged Abbess of a company of nuns at Antioch, who used to chant, as Julian went by in idolatrous procession, the Psalm, "Their idols are silver and gold, even the work of men's hands . . . they that make them are like unto them : and so are all such as put their trust in them;" and he narrates how the angry Emperor caused his soldiers to buffet her till she bled, unable as he was to endure the sting of the old Hebrew song. There are other *vain gods*, mere phantom objects of worship, besides graven images, as they seasonably remind us; for all assiduous court and homage paid to persons endowed with wealth and power, and all preference of earthly things to the will of God, is idolatry. *Worship Him, all ye Gods*. This may be taken as a direct challenge to the false deities of heathenism, and as a further claim on behalf of God upon such Pagans as acknowledge that an idol is nothing in itself, but allege that they worship the invisible deity which presides over it, the
- Rom. vi. 9.
- Hist. Eccl.  
iii. 14.
- Ps. cxv. 4,  
8.
- Hugo Card.
- A.



angel, good or evil, whom they invoke. If the true God be so great that even these mighty beings are bound to do Him homage, then the case becomes even stronger than before against the graven images. The Syriac and LXX. both have here *Angels for Gods*: and this interpretation is strengthened by the citation of a precisely similar phrase from the LXX. reading of Deut. xxxii. 43, "When He bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the Angels of God worship Him." The Angels did worship Him, as they sang at His Nativity, as they ministered to Him in the wilderness after the Temptation, as they attended Him in His Ascension. It is sufficient to mention the allegory seen here by Cardinal Hugo, of the special service of worship rendered to CHRIST by the ministry of the hierarchy of the Church, His *Angels* or messengers to mankind.

Bellarmine.

Agellius.  
Heb. i. 6.

Z.

Hugo Card.

8 Sion heard of it, and rejoiced : and the daughters of Judah were glad, because of thy judgments, O LORD.

The Chaldee gives us the key-note here, paraphrasing *The Church of Sion*. The whole Church Militant here on earth in its expectation, all the local daughter Churches, all the holy souls in each such Church, true children of *praise*, rejoice in the spread of the Gospel, in the proofs of CHRIST's sovereignty, in the righteousness of His sway. And, with closer reference to the historical meaning, we may take the Church of Sion to mean that first small assembly in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, and the subsequent clause to denote all those children whom their preaching bore to CHRIST, the Prince of the house of Judah. One commentator will have it that there is here a direct reference to the joy of the Apostles in Sion, and of the saintly women who abode with them, the Blessed Virgin, S. Mary Magdalene, and others, when they knew that all the Angels had worshipped and done homage to their LORD in His Ascension. And so we read, "They worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." There may be, not improbably, a reference to the solemn processional dances of the Hebrew virgins, of which we read often in Holy Writ, beginning with that which was led by Miriam after the destruction of the Egyptian forces in the Red Sea.

Targum.

B.

C.

Hugo Card.

P.

S. Luke  
xxiv. 52.

L.

9 For thou, LORD, art higher than all that are in the earth : thou art exalted far above all gods.

The word *for* is here emphatic. It is possible for us to rejoice with a sure gladness in CHRIST's judgments, because He is supreme, and His findings cannot be overruled and set aside by any higher authority. It is even more a thought of

Bellarmine.



rejoicing for the daughters of Judah, all tender and faithful souls, that it is their own Bridegroom, One of their own flesh and blood, Who is throned above the highest Archangels, and that He, now LORD and King of heaven, has thrown it open to us.

The Hymn,  
*Optatus  
votis  
omnium.*

He hath gone up in clouds above,  
Bestowing hope on them who love,  
And throweth open Eden's door,  
Which our first parents closed of yore.

O wondrous joy for all men won,  
That He, a mortal Maiden's Son,  
Who bore the spitting, stripes, and Tree,  
Now shares the FATHER'S Majesty!

10 O ye that love the LORD, see that ye hate the thing which is evil : the LORD preserveth the souls of his saints ; he shall deliver them from the hand of the ungodly.

Here is a test of true love for God, not merely abstaining from evil, but *hating* it, shunning it for its own sake, and not only for the danger of indulging in it. The *evil*, here assumed to be a thing, is by many commentators taken as a person, the Evil One. We may have a lower and imperfect love of God, mixed in character and motives, which does not involve a hatred of sin ; but that love of Him which is pure, and for His own sake only, includes this abhorrence of His opposite necessarily. And thus a Saint observes, " Let no man deceive himself, God and the devil cannot be loved alike by one person, for either the devil is hated, or God is loved ; if the devil is loved, it must needs be that God is despised." How then can we apply a sufficient touchstone of our sincerity in love ? Another of the Saints shall answer : " You must ask your heart, your tongue, your work, whether you truly love God. Your heart, because the heart thinks often on what it loves, and if you do not often think of God, you cannot believe that you truly love Him ; and if you think more of the world than of God, you love the world more than God. Ask your tongue if you love God ; for the tongue gladly names what the heart loves ; therefore he who speaks chiefly of the world is proved to love it more than God. Ask of your work, whether you love God, for fire cannot be among straw and not burn, and no more can the fire of divine love be in the heart without showing itself in action." *The Lord preserveth the souls of His saints.* Here we may note two things, that the LORD makes no promise as to the *bodies*, nor yet as to the souls of any save His *Saints*. He suffered the persecutors to work their will on the tortured bodies of His martyrs, but He did not permit their souls to be shaken by either threats or blan-

Honorius.  
Tertullian.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.

Ay.

Cajetanus.

S. Chrysost.  
Hom. sup.  
Gen. 3.

S. Bernard.  
Serm. de  
S. Laurent.

Anon. Græc.



dishments. But He offers His salvation to all who will accept it, and will not allow any soul which trusts in Him to be separated from His love. How freely He does give not only His help, but Himself, that He may be with us as our defence, we may gather from those words which the Western Church has for many centuries addressed to those who draw near His altar to receive Him under the form of bread and wine: "The Body of our LORD JESUS CHRIST preserve thy soul unto everlasting life. Amen." And *He shall deliver them out of the hand of the ungodly*, not only by His grace and the protection of His holy Angels here, but by saving them from the accusations of the enemy in the judgment, and appointing them to be where no servants of evil can ever trouble them more.

Sacram.  
Gregor.

D. C.

Ay.

Bellarmino.

11 There is sprung up a light for the righteous :  
and joyful gladness for such as are true-hearted.

*Sprung up.* The literal Hebrew is *sown*. And this may mean simply widely diffused, scattered abroad, as we have the same figure in Milton, speaking of the dew at dawn,

Now Morn her rosy steps in th' Eastern clime  
Advancing, sowed the earth with Orient pearl.

Paradise  
Lost, v. 3.

And Lucretius, more exactly,

Sol etiam summo de vertice dissipat omnes  
Ardorem in partes, et lumine conserit arva,

Lucret. 2.

And the sun from mid-heaven sheds his heat  
On every side, and sows the fields with light.

But we get a deeper meaning, suggested by R. Kimchi, who explains the words of the sowing of the seeds of light and joy in this world for the righteous, which they are to reap abundantly in the harvest of Messiah. We may take it first, then, of the seeds of Divine grace sown in the illumination of Baptism, and growing up ever more and more to the perfect day of true holiness; and then of CHRIST Himself, sown with tears in the grave, to rise again in glory, bringing gladness to His people. The Chaldee, LXX., and Vulgate, however, read simply *sprung up*, as above, or *risen*. And that we may take at pleasure as signifying the Incarnation or Resurrection of CHRIST the true Light, or else as denoting the mission of the HOLY GHOST; the effect of either of which, or rather of both, is the enlightening of the heart with the inward illumination of Divine grace, which is vouchsafed to the *righteous and true-hearted*; not to those who are naturally and inherently such, but to all who have washed their sins in the Blood of CHRIST. And all such may say with

R. Kimchi.

Cocceius.

Philip de la  
Grève.

R.

Hugo Card.



S. August.  
Soll. 38.

one of the truest of penitents: "There was a great dark cloud of vanity before mine eyes, so that I could not see the Sun of Righteousness and the light of truth; I being the son of darkness, was involved in darkness: I loved my darkness because I knew not Thy light: I was blind, and loved my blindness, and did walk from darkness to darkness: but, LORD, Thou art my GOD, Who hast led me out of darkness and the shadow of death, Who hast called me into this glorious light, and, behold, I see."

12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous: and give thanks for a remembrance of his holiness.

Targum.

*Remembrance of His holiness.* The Chaldee paraphrases to the memory of His Holy Name; that is, that every time the Sacred Name of GOD occurs to our thoughts, it should be greeted with joy and thanksgiving. But the ambiguity of the Vulgate rendering, for the memory of His sanctification, has caused many of the commentators to see here, not an attribute of GOD, but a grace bestowed by Him on His people, for which they are to give thanks. It is Justification by faith, say most of them; it is sacramental Confession, which cleanses our souls, as another will have it; it is Holy Baptism, according to yet a third view. We may reconcile the two schools of interpretation by translating, literally enough, Give thanks to His holy memorial, and seeing in the words a prophecy of that Eucharistic worship, where we bless and thank Him in His own memorial rite, wherein He is Priest and Victim, Host and Guest. And thus S. Thomas,

Haymo.  
R.  
Lyranus.  
D. C.  
Ay.  
L.

The Rhythm,  
Adoro te  
devoite.

O most sweet memorial of His death and woe,  
Living Bread, which givest life to man below,  
Let my spirit ever eat of Thee and live,  
And the blest fruition of Thy sweetness give.

Wherefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD of the whole earth;  
glory be to the SON, Who preserveth the souls of His Saints;  
glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who is the joyful gladness of the true-hearted.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

Ludolph.

O GOD, Preserver of holy souls, Whose kingdom is the perfect lot of the righteous, grant that the lightnings of the Prophets and Evangelists may enter into our hearts, and if there be aught found therein covered with the ancient veil, let it be disclosed by the revelation of the HOLY GHOST. (1.)

Mozarabic.

O GOD, in Whose kingdom the earth of believers rejoices,



Whose righteousness the heavens declare, Whose sovereignty the legions of Angels worship, preserve the souls of Thy servants; and lest we should perish by following the author of evil, deliver and protect and preserve us, that when the burning fire shall go before Thy face, the punishment due to our merits may not lay hold of us to burn us up, but the mercy of our Maker rescue us that we may live. (11.)

O LORD GOD, Most Highest over all the earth, teach us to love Thee with entire devotion, and to hate evil; preserve our souls in this life, and when they pass hence, deliver them from the place of everlasting punishment. (1.) D. C.

## PSALM XCVIII.

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: A Psalm of David. Chaldee Targum: A Prophetic Psalm.

### ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That GOD, by the Advent of the Nativity, hath declared His salvation unto all. The Voice of the Apostles, rejoicing at the Resurrection of CHRIST. Further, the Voice of the Church to the LORD and to the Apostles. The Apostolic Voice. A Prophecy, and the calling of the Gentiles. Concerning the first and second coming of CHRIST.

VEN. BEDE. This title refers to the LORD CHRIST, concerning both Whose comings this Psalm is about to speak.

The Prophet speaks throughout the Psalm. In the first part he recommends the Christian people to be glad with the rejoicing of a new song, since the wondrous Advent of CHRIST is granted. *O sing unto the Lord a new song, &c.* In the second part he declares more fully in various ways that we should rejoice, because the Judge desired by the righteous is to come at last. *Show yourselves joyful in the Lord, all ye lands, &c.*

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David. Concerning the freedom of the people from Egypt, when they conquered and triumphed. Spiritually, it is a prophecy of the coming of CHRIST and the calling of the Gentiles.

EUSEBIUS OF CESAREA. The calling of the Gentiles and the coming of CHRIST.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of exhortation and as it were of command.

### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian.* Saturday: Matins. [Christmas Day, Circumcision, Trinity Sunday, Holy Name, Invention and Exaltation of the Cross, Nails and Spear, Sacred Heart, Common of B.V.M., Common of Virgins: III. Nocturn.]

*Monastic.* Friday: II. Nocturn. [Christmas Day, Circumcision, Epiphany, Whitsun Day, Trinity Sunday, Holy Name, Invention



and Exaltation of the Cross, Common of B.V.M., Common of Virgins: II. Nocturn.]

*Ambrosian.* Thursday of Second Week: III. Nocturn. [Christmas Day: I. Nocturn. Epiphany: I. Nocturn.]

*Parisian.* Monday: Sext. [Christmas Day: III. Nocturn.]

*Lyons.* Friday: III. Nocturn. [Epiphany: III. Nocturn.]

*Quignon.* Monday: Lauds.

#### ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* For He hath done marvellous things. [Christmas Day: The LORD declared, Alleluia, \* His salvation, Alleluia. Epiphany: Before the morning star \* begotten, and before the worlds, the LORD our SAVIOUR vouchsafed to be born to-day. Trinity Sunday: The FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST is one substance. O Blessed Trinity. Holy Name: O sing unto GOD, and sing praises unto His Name, make a path for Him Who ascendeth over the sunset, the LORD is His Name. Sacred Heart: All the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our GOD. Common of B.V.M.: After thy childbearing, thou didst remain a spotless Virgin; Mother of GOD, intercede for us. Common of Virgins: Come, Bride of CHRIST, receive the crown, which the LORD hath prepared for thee for evermore.]

*Monastic.* [Epiphany: As Christmas Day. Whitsun Day: Stablish the thing, O GOD, which Thou hast wrought in us, for Thy temple's sake at Jerusalem, Alleluia, Alleluia. Trinity Sunday: Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD GOD Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. Common of Virgins: Thou art fair and comely, O daughter of Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.]

*Ambrosian.* Show yourselves joyful before the LORD the King. Kyr. Kyr. Kyr. [Christmas and Epiphany: The LORD declared His salvation. Kyr. Kyr. Kyr.]

*Parisian.* The LORD hath chosen out an heritage for us, which He hath loved. [Christmas Day: As *Gregorian*.]

*Lyons.* Let my crying \* come unto Thee, O LORD. [Epiphany: As Christmas Day, *Gregorian*.]

*Mozarabic.* The LORD declared His salvation: His righteousness hath He openly shown in the sight of the heathen.

1 O sing unto the LORD a new song : for he hath done marvellous things.

2 With his own right hand, and with his holy arm : hath he gotten himself the victory.

Timotheus.

Agellius.

The song must be *new*, because of the unwonted nature of the marvellous things which God has wrought. When of old He brought His people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm, it was but one small nation that He saved, it was only a human enemy that He overthrew in the Red Sea. But now the salvation He has wrought extends to all the nations of the earth, the enemy He has routed is the Prince of the powers of the air, attended by all the spiritual wickednesses. He hath done *marvellous things* in the mys-



tery of His Incarnation, Nativity, Passion, Resurrection, Bellarmine. Ascension, and the mission of the HOLY GHOST, not to speak of the miracles He wrought in person during His earthly ministry, or by the hands of His servants since. But the words most especially refer to His raising Himself up from the dead by His own inherent power, by the might of that Godhead which He united to the Manhood. Therefore He saith of His life, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." And in that He wrought this marvel alone, with no human or angelic aid in the agony of His Passion, with no hand to pluck Him back from the grave; He said in prophecy of old, "The year of My redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore Mine own arm hath brought salvation unto Me, and My fury, it upheld Me." We may also, without any material change in the meaning, take the words as spoken by the FATHER, Who declares that He wrought the salvation of mankind by one instrument alone, His Right Hand, the Only-begotten SON, in Whose Second Advent, of which this Psalm sings as well as His first, the triumph will be completed.

Genebrardus.

C.

s. John x. 18.

Isa. lxiii. 4. 6.

L.  
Theodoret.

3 The LORD declared his salvation : his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen.

It is the manifestation of the Only-Begotten, the SAVIOUR of Mankind, the Light to lighten the Gentiles, of Whom Simeon chanted his dying song, doubtless looking to this Psalm. And observe that it is not said in the first clause that God *showed*, but that He *made known* (A.V., LXX., Vulg.) His salvation. For He had shown it in mystery of old to the Patriarchs. Adam knew Him, and so did Abel, who offered Him a lamb; and Seth, who called on His Name; and Noah, who was His type, saving mankind in the Ark; and Abraham, who offered up his son. But the world had forgotten Him, and therefore the FATHER made Him *known*. He did so with care that His Nativity should not pass unnoticed, for He made it known to the shepherds by the Angels, to the wise men by a star, to Zacharias and Elizabeth by S. Gabriel, to Simeon and Anna by the HOLY GHOST. But to the Gentiles, who had no previous knowledge to be recalled, He *openly showed* His righteousness. Wherefore it is to be noticed that the Apostles never address their Gentile congregations in parables, as their Master did the Jews, but make direct proclamation of the Gospel.

C.  
De Muis.Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
Honorius.

Ay.

D. C.

4 He hath remembered his mercy and truth toward the house of Israel : and all the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our God.



Titelman.

S. Bruno  
Carth.Pseudo-  
Hieron.

Iss. xlix. 6.

The term *remembered* is here employed, as in the Benedictus and Magnificat, not as in any way denoting the possibility of forgetfulness on God's part, but to set before our minds the length of time which elapsed before the promised Deliverer appeared, a delay which would, in any human analogy, be due to oblivion. It is said, *to the house of Israel*, because the promises of *mercy* were originally made only to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so that God's truth was concerned in fulfilling His pledge, and accordingly the first manifestation of the SAVIOUR, the first preaching of the Gospel, was amongst the people and in the land of Israel. And then the latter clause of the verse teaches us that this mercy of God is extended to *all the ends of the world*, to all those Gentiles who had no claim on His truth, in that He has shown them His JESUS. And precisely so runs the prophecy in Isaiah: "It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the desolations of Israel; I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth."

5 Show yourselves joyful unto the LORD, all ye lands : sing, rejoice, and give thanks.

C.

They tell us that by the use of these several words various grades of spiritual exultation are denoted, to each of which *all the lands*, the whole extent of the Church Universal, are invited. *Show yourselves joyful* is the first inarticulate expression of the soul's delight, striving for utterance, but not yet able to collect itself, nor to perfectly understand the nature of its gladness; *sing* tells us that words of suitable devotion have been found at last; *rejoice* tells of the fervent happiness with which the Saints pour forth their prayers to God; and *give thanks* (which the LXX. and Vulgate render *play, psallere, psallite*) implies the active laud of good works performed for His sake.

6 Praise the LORD upon the harp : sing to the harp with a psalm of thanksgiving.

7 With trumpets also, and shawms : O show yourselves joyful before the LORD the King.

Hugo Card.  
1 Cor. xiv.  
19.

P.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.

We have now five methods of rejoicing put before us, the five words which we speak with our understanding in the Church, better than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue, and answering to the five titles of CHRIST given earlier in the Psalm, to wit, right hand, holy arm, salvation, righteousness, and truth. As regards the mystical signification of the various instruments named here, we are reminded first that the harp teaches that all our faculties, all parts of



our conduct, should be vocal with melody to God. For a harp is imperfect, if even one chord be lacking, or if the strings be not tuned in harmony. What profits it thee, then, if thou be chaste, liberal in almsgiving, and yet envious? What advantage is it if thou have six strings sound and one broken? If even one fail, the sound of the harp cannot be perfect. The harp (a symbol of mortification, with its tense strings and empty hollow) is twice named, to teach us that bodily austerity and the practice of holiness need to be repeated, and not be left off after beginning, that we are to praise with body and soul, in prosperity and adversity, in this life and the next; and it is coupled with the *psalm of thanksgiving* in the second place, because contemplation and prayer, in addition to active virtues, are essential to the full development of spiritual life and joy. Some, however, think that the ten-stringed *psalter* is meant here, implying the keeping of the moral law. *With trumpets also and shawms.* The Vulgate, distinguishing with sufficient accuracy between the straight silver trumpets implied by the former word, and the curved ram's horns of the latter, translates, *On ductile trumpets, and with the sound of the horny trumpet*.<sup>1</sup> The first are aptly assigned to the herald proclamation of the Gospel law, purified from the dross of the elder code by the fire and hammer of CHRIST's Passion, while the humbler cornet is the pastoral address of Christian shepherds to their flocks. Euthymius will have it that both the trumpets and the cornet denote the Apostles and their successors; saying that the plural word points to the four Gospels, the singular one to their identity; while the metallic epithet signifies the operation of the HOLY GHOST on the Apostles, shaping and moulding them at His will, and the word *horn*, as betokening that which once had animal life, implies that they were not mere dead instruments, but endowed with vitality and personal force. Yet another view sees in the metal trumpets purged in the fire, the martyrs of CHRIST; and in the cornet, made of that which springs from the flesh, yet is not of it, but stands out from it, the Confessors who have checked all their carnal passions by austerity and by lifting themselves up towards God.

*O show yourselves joyful before the Lord the King.* We do this when we keep God so constantly present before us in our thoughts, words, and deeds, that we are conscious of acting with continual reference to Him, and not to the world or to ourselves, and that with a glad and filial service, not with the servile terror of bondslaves. The notion is that of the processional march with music and singing to greet the King as He returns from victory and coronation. And as a monarch in such cases bestows largesses upon his subjects,

Hugo Card.  
Le Blanc.

Z.

P.

Z.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
C.

Ay.

Agellius.  
C.

<sup>1</sup> See Psalm lxxxi. 3. But | Psalter where the straight trum-  
this verse is the only one in the | pets *nr̄yq̄n* are mentioned.



Haymo.

so the special time for this rejoicing on our part is when our King comes to judgment, and bestows rewards on His faithful people.

8 Let the sea make a noise, and all that therein is : the round world, and they that dwell therein.

9 Let the floods clap their hands, and let the hills be joyful together before the LORD : for he is come to judge the earth.

Rom. viii.

22.

Agellius.

Cd.

Pseudo-

Hieron.

S. Athana-  
sius.

Hugo Card.

S. Cyril.

Alex.

Honorius.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.

A.

Arnobius.

Bellarmine.

The Psalmist calls the inanimate creation, which had aforetime been groaning and travailing in pain, awaiting the SAVIOUR, to swell the hymn of triumph in honour of Almighty God, raised by all that dwell in the round world. But there are spiritual meanings underlying the various terms used. The *sea*, as one will have it, denotes the Law, once bitter, now made sweet by the wood of the Cross; or else, as so often, it means the restless, tossing, bitter, and sorrowful life of the world, and all that are mixed up with it, though it may also denote those who shed the salt tears of penitence: the *round world*, those within the circle of the Church, firm and fruitful: the *floods*, drinking in the waters of wisdom from their source, and irrigating the dry ground, denote all holy preachers of the Word; the *hills* are those in high position, especially in the offices of the Church. The Pseudo-Jerome, arguing against the hyper-literalism of Jewish expositors, points to the phrase *clap their hands*, as inapplicable in any strict sense to the floods, and insists on the spiritual interpretation as necessarily meaning those Saints of various degrees of eminence, from the merest rill to the mightiest torrent, who all alike flow from the LORD JESUS, the fountain of living waters. These *clap their hands* because they work for God, and are not content with talking about Him, since He is best served and praised with the hand, not with the voice. And observe, remarks S. Augustine, that it is exactly when the *sea makes a noise*, when the storms of persecution are raging, that the Saints are most zealous and most happy, that they clap their hands in honour of their King. Arnobius, who seems to prefer that meaning of the floods which more than one commentator adopts, namely, all the faithful regenerated in the sweet waters of Baptism, reminds us that the rivers flow down from the *hills*, and bids us see here the exaltation of Christian Saints and teachers in the spiritual might and progress of their disciples in the Faith. *For He is come to judge the earth.* We may take this either of the first or of the second coming of CHRIST. If of the first, then the ground of rejoicing is that the LORD comes to rule the world with a perfectly righteous code, and to do so not as of old, in the unseen majesty of Godhead, but in bodily and visible form as a Man dwelling with men. If of the second Advent, then



the final victory over sin, and the renewal of all creation, delivered at last from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, is the theme of rejoicing. Rom. viii.  
21.

10 With righteousness shall he judge the world :  
and the people with equity.

This Psalm ends precisely as the ninety-sixth, with the exception of the last word, *equity*, instead of *truth*. Agellius. It is a word of hope and of fear alike. Of hope, because the feeble and oppressed will find an advocate in their Judge against all the power arrayed against them, for it is written, "With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and argue with equity for the meek of the earth." Isa. xi. 4. Of fear, "for if Thou, LORD, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O LORD, who may abide it?" Ps. cxxx. 3. But as He hath not yet come, why should men tremble? Let them amend, and rejoice. It is in thine own power, how thou shalt look for the coming of CHRIST. A. He delays that coming, that He may not have to condemn thee. Behold, He cometh not yet. He is in heaven, and thou on earth; He delays His Advent, delay not thou thy counsel. His coming is hard to the hard, is gentle to the loving. Look then at once what thou art; if hard, thou mayest soften; if gentle, rejoice that He is coming. For thou art a Christian. Yes, sayest thou. I believe that thou prayest, and thou sayest, "Thy kingdom come." Thou desirest Him to come, of Whose coming thou art afraid. Amend, that thy prayer be not against thyself.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD and King; glory be to the SON, His own Right Hand, Who shall judge the world with righteousness; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who declared the salvation of God.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

O LORD, Who hast revealed Thy righteousness to all the Gentiles, and Thy salvation unto our minds, grant that as Thou didst once come to be judged on behalf of the lost, Thou mayest bestow mercy when Thou comest to judge, on them for whom Thou wast judged. Who. Ludolph.

Let Thy right hand deliver us, O LORD, and bow the necks of the haughty under Thy dominion, that the nations may be enlightened with the coming of truth, and with holiness of heart accept the salvation shown unto them. (11.) Mozarabic.

Let all the earth sing unto Thee, O LORD, sing a psalm, rejoice, and praise Thy Name, Whose Name is wonderful and glorious. Grant therefore unto the prayers of Thy



Church, that Thou mayest never forsake in temptation those whom Thou callest in faith, and that they who sing unto Thee the song of praise may attain the reward of eternal blessedness in the world to come. (11.)

Mozarabic.

All the earth sings unto Thee, O LORD, and all they that dwell therein, the floods clap their hands unto Thee; and not only do the voices of the Doctors wait on Thee with the service of speech, but their zeal also attends Thee with the observance of good works. Grant therefore, O our God, that by Thine inspiration both constant praise and unwearied meditation, together with the pure and undefiled religion of holy conversation, may prevail in us. (11.)

Mozarabic.

O God, Who hast made known Thy salvation amongst the peoples, by revealing Thy righteousness in the sight of the Gentiles, show unto us the abundance of Thy mercies, that as we are lifted up by the knowledge of Thy salvation, we may be comforted by the revelation of Thy righteousness. (11.)

Mozarabic.  
for S. Mary.

Let all creation sing a new song unto Thee, O LORD, Who didst show forth in the Virgin Mary the marvel of a new childbearing, that a woman should compass a man, and a Virgin without knowing man should bring forth a male child; grant that we in this world may be aided by her prayers, who brought Thee forth in stainless birth: that our mind, strengthened by the light of the HOLY GHOST, may so conceive the affection of Thy love, as always to bring forth the increase of good works. (11.)

D. C.

Almighty, everlasting God, Who alone workest great marvels, remember Thy mercy, and correct us when we go astray, and make us so steadfastly and faithfully abide by Thee, that we may be fitted to sing acceptable songs unto Thee, our LORD, for evermore. (1.)

## PSALM XCIX.

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: A Psalm of David.

### ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST is taken up into the heavenly Sion, and is to be accounted high above all peoples. The Voice of the Church concerning the Advent of CHRIST. The Voice of the Apostles to the people of the Jews, that they should be wroth against evil spirits and vices, and follow CHRIST the LORD. The Voice of the Church to the LORD, and of the Apostles to the people of the Jews. Concerning the Tree of CHRIST and a declaration of the merits of the Saints.



**VEN. BEDÆ.** David is taken as CHRIST, Whose honour and power are sung of in this Psalm. In the first section the Prophet exhorts all the peoples to confess to CHRIST the LORD, because He hath executed judgment and righteousness in Jacob. *The Lord is King, let the people be angry, &c.* In the second, he exhorts the people to worship the LORD the SAVIOUR, Who was gracious to Moses and Aaron, and Samuel, because they kept His laws, whence he saith that the LORD, Who vouchsafed to hear His faithful ones, is to be exalted and worshipped. *O magnify the Lord our God, &c.*

**SYRIAC PSALTER.** Of David, concerning the slaughter of the Midianites, whom Moses and the people of Israel led captive. And a prophecy of the glory of CHRIST's Kingdom.

**EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA.** A Hymn of the Kingdom of CHRIST.

**S. ATHANASIUS.** A Psalm of glorying in the LORD.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian.* Saturday: Matins. [Circumcision, Ascension, Common of Apostles, Dedication of a Church: III. Nocturn.]

*Monastic.* Friday: II. Nocturn. [Christmas Day, Circumcision, Epiphany, Ascension, Corpus CHRISTI, Common of B.V.M., Common of Apostles, Common of Virgins, Dedication: II. Nocturn.]

*Ambrosian.* Thursday of Second Week: III. Nocturn.

*Parisian.* Monday: Sext.

*Lyons.* Saturday: Terce.

*Quignon.* Thursday: Lauds.

#### ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* As preceding Psalm. [Circumcision: When the LORD was born \* the choir of angels sang; saying, Salvation to our GOD, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. Ascension: The LORD in Sion, \* Alleluia, is great and exalted, Alleluia. Common of Apostles: They kept \* His testimonies and His laws, Alleluia. Dedication: Blessed \* be the glory of the LORD from His holy place, Alleluia.]

*Monastic.* As preceding Psalm. [Christmas Day: When the LORD was born, the choir of angels sang, saying, Salvation to our GOD, Alleluia. Circumcision: as *Gregorian*. Epiphany: Three are the gifts which the Wise Men offered to the LORD, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, to the SON of GOD, the Great King, Alleluia. Ascension: as *Gregorian*. Corpus CHRISTI: The LORD is great in Sion, \* Moses and Aaron among His priests. Common of B.V.M.: I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded. Common of Apostles: as *Gregorian*. Common of Virgins: She girded her loins with strength, and strengthened her arms, therefore her candle shall not go out for evermore. Dedication: as *Gregorian*.

*Ambrosian.* As preceding Psalm.

*Mozarabic.* The LORD is great in Sion, and high above all people.



1 The LORD is King, be the people never so impatient : he sitteth between the cherubims, be the earth never so unquiet.

L. This is the last of the series of six Royal Psalms, from 93 to 99 inclusive, (with the omission of 94,) terminating in Psalm 100 as a doxology, which make proclamation of the Kingdom of GOD. Three of them, 93, 97, and 99, make this proclamation in their opening words ; but with a certain difference of application. The first points to the splendour of God's reign, the second to its spread and happiness, the third and last to its resistless power.

Hugo Card.

*Impatient.* The LXX. and Vulgate read *be angry*, the A.V. more correctly, with Syriac and Symmachus, *tremble*. The word implies quivering with agitation from any cause, and this is translated by S. Jerome simply as *moved*. But these various shades of meaning all converge in the one thought of God's supremacy, and the uselessness of any human striving against it. Taking the Psalm, with the Greek Fathers, as a Post-Captivity hymn, the literal reference will be to the setting up of the Theocracy anew in the midst of idolatrous nations, and despite their active resistance. But the Christian expositors, with one voice, read it as a proclamation of the Kingdom of CHRIST. S. Justin Martyr twice writes it at full length as an indisputable prophecy of the Gospel, of the reign of that King Whom the Jews rejected in their anger, against Whose new law the Gentiles raged ; for, as S. Irenæus observes, " those who said *The Lord hath reigned, let the people be angry, He sitteth upon the cherubim, let the earth be moved*, were thus predicting partly that wrath from all nations which after His Ascension came upon those who believed in Him, with the movement of the whole earth against the Church ; and partly that fact that when He comes from heaven with His mighty angels, the whole earth shall be shaken, as He Himself declares, ' There shall be a great earthquake, such as has not been from the beginning.' "

S. Basil. M.  
Theodoret.

Dial. c.  
Tryphon.  
37, 64.  
Eusebius.  
S. Athanasius.  
S. Iren. c.  
Hæres. iv.  
33, 13.

S. Matt.  
xxiv. 7, 21.

Z.

S. Matt.  
ii. 1.

How soon this anger and trembling began after the announcement of the new reign, the Evangelist may tell us, as he narrates that when " there came Wise Men from the East to worship Him? When Herod the king had heard, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." And still, whenever God gives proof that He is King, either by His undisputed rule in the hearts of His faithful servants, or by His conversion of sinners, or yet again, by granting revival to His Church after a time of sleep and torpor, after a lowered standard of teaching or of worship : then evil men immediately begin to be angry, and attempt to overthrow His dominion, as we read that after Judas Maccabæus purified

Hugo Card.



the desecrated Temple, and restored the lights, incense, and daily sacrifice, "when the nations round about heard that the altar was built, and the sanctuary renewed as before, it displeased them very much, wherefore they thought to destroy the generation of Jacob that was among them, and therefore they began to slay and destroy the people." There is, however, a good sense in which we may take the words, of that salutary anger against their own sins with which penitents rise up to chastise them, when they have once thoroughly realized that the LORD is King.

*He sitteth between the cherubims.* The immediate reference is, of course, to the Mercy-seat in the Holy of holies, overshadowed by the statues of the cherubim on each side, and brooded over by the mysterious Shechinah. Hence, those commentators who suppose this to be a Davidic Psalm, explain the verse of David's capture of the citadel of Sion from the Jebusites, and his transfer of the Ark thither from the house of Obed-Edom, a type of the victory of CHRIST's kingdom. But we are not limited to this sense, for the word *between* does not stand in the original, which rather requires *upon* or *above*. And then we come to the visions of Ezekiel and Daniel, whence we pass to the thought of the Ascension and enthronement of the LORD JESUS, "for," as S. John Chrysostom teaches us, "it was not enough for His perfect glory to pass into the heavens, nor to take His stand with the Angels; but He passed through the heavens, ascended above the Cherubim, was exalted beyond the Seraphim, and stayed not till He had attained the throne of the LORD." *Above* the cherubim, wisest of all creatures, because their knowledge, vast and measureless by us though it be, is yet finite, acquired by the process of thought, and derived, whereas perfect knowledge of all things is inherent, without effort, in the nature of God.

Will He stay Him where the Cherubs, of created things most wise,  
Ponder in rapt meditation on the heavenly mysteries?  
Nay, for He, Eternal Wisdom, Sole-begotten, Uncreate,  
Is the source of all those marvels upon which they meditate.

Ever onward, ever higher, passes He those ranks above,  
Where the Seraphs are on fire with the flame of endless love,  
Passes them, for not e'en Seraphs ever loved so well as He,  
Who hath borne, for His beloved ones, stripes, and scorn, and shameful Tree.

S. Augustine tells us that we too, by having within us the fulness of knowledge, become spiritually cherubim, and make our souls a throne for God. And to the first question how man, with his finite capacities, can obtain this fulness of knowledge, seeing that he is ignorant of even such matters as the visible facts of creation; the Saint replies that the meaning for us is simply a perfect knowledge of God's law. But,

Mac. v. 1.

C.

D. C.

L.

Vasquez.

Lyræus.

Ay.

Ezek. i. 15.

Dan. vii. 9.

S. John

Chrysos.

de Ascen.

A.

Pereira in

Dan. lib. 4.



- again, this raises a difficulty for the unlearned and the scrupulous. How can they tell that they do know that law fully? The answer is of the briefest. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." *Let the earth be moved.* (LXX. Vulg. A.V.) Not merely does this mean that no shaking of the earth, no tumult of the nations, can make that throne totter which is borne up by cherubim, but it is a command to earth to stand in awe of the LORD, and a warning to those who have heretofore been firmly rooted in earthly sin, who were unshaken in obstinacy, established in ungodliness, fixed in error, that they should now cast themselves loose from all such hold, and anchor themselves on the love of GOD; and that Israel, in particular, should pass from the carnal law to the spiritual Gospel. And it is well said *be moved*, for the sinner cannot move of himself. No feeble hand can stir that earth, for it is heavy and firm; as it is written, "A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both." Wherefore the Prophet cries thrice, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the Word of the LORD," yield thyself to be moved by the ploughshare of His teaching, that thou mayest bring forth fruit for Him.

## 2 The LORD is great in Sion : and high above all people.

- Didymus. First, because in Sion, as the central and holy city of Judaism, the Name of GOD was magnified, and His will revealed in the prophets, and then because it was from Sion that the Gospel law went forth, when the WORD of GOD Himself appeared in human form in the midst of Jerusalem, and wrought there miracles which were to be noised abroad among all people; especially that crowning one of the mysterious Sacrament of His Body and Blood, which destroys idolatry wherever it is made known. Thence it comes that He is great too in the spiritual Sion of His waiting and watching Church on earth, diffused amongst all nations, ever exalting His Majesty.
- Z.  
C.  
Hesychius.  
Bellarmine.

## 3 They shall give thanks unto thy Name : which is great, wonderful, and holy.

- The FATHER's Name is *great*, for He is the Source, the Creator, the LORD of all; the SON's Name is *wonderful*, for He is Eternal Wisdom, and it is *terrible* (LXX. Vulg. A.V.) for He is to be our Judge; the Name of the HOLY GHOST, is *holy*, for He it is Who bestows hallowing and sanctification. The Hebrew commentators see here the mystic Tetragrammaton יהוה, whose true pronunciation was kept a profound secret by the Rabbins, owing to a feeling of awful reverence; while the Greeks are precise in bidding us take it of that Name which is *terrible* to God's enemies, *holy* to His friends, and *great* to both, the Name of JESUS.
- Hugo Card.  
Genebrardus.  
Cd.



'Tis the Name by right exalted  
 Over every other name :  
 That when we are sore assaulted  
 Puts our enemies to shame ;  
 Strength to them that else had halted,  
 Eyes to blind, and feet to lame.

The Hymn,  
*Gloriosi  
 Salvatoris.*

To this Name we *give thanks*, not too curiously inquiring into the mystery of the Incarnation, but gratefully rejoicing in the blessings it has brought us. And S. Bonaventura, in his Life of S. Francis, tells us that whenever the Saint, in the course of his reading aloud, had occasion to pronounce the Name of JESUS, he lingered on the sound with a tender, loving emphasis, and with a musical ring in his tone unheard at other times ; and that he was scrupulous to let no fragment of writing which had those syllables in it, lie neglected on the ground or be put to any servile use.

Z.

S. Bonaven-  
 tura in Vit.  
 S. Francis.

4 The King's power loveth judgment ; thou hast prepared equity : thou hast executed judgment and righteousness in Jacob.

The sudden change in the construction in the first clause here from the second person to the third, and then back again, has induced some critics to connect the verse closely with the preceding, especially as it begins in the Hebrew with *And*, omitted or misplaced by both English versions, but rightly put by LXX. and Vulgate : *And the King's power loveth judgment*. The order then will be, They shall give thanks unto Thy Name, because it is holy, and to Thy royal might, for it loves justice. There is, however, a slight difficulty in the way. The word *Holy* at the end of the third verse does not belong, as an epithet, to *Name*, but directly to God Himself. It is a refrain, *He is Holy*, and it recurs at the end of the fifth and ninth verses, thus making the *Tersanctus*, in honour of Him Who was, and is, and is to come, the Trinity in Unity. But if we take this refrain here as a pure intercalation, not interrupting the structure of the sentence and the flow of thought, we may still connect the first part of the verse with the *give thanks* of the preceding one. The commentators have various explanations of this love of judgment here attributed to God, besides that first and obvious sense of His own inherent essential righteousness. Thus one will have it that God loves judgment, because He does not choose to be worshipped out of mere caprice and without due thought, but with a reasonable, meditative, intelligent service. Again, He loves impartiality and fair dealing amongst men ; He loves, yet more, that sinners should sit in judgment on their own sins, and condemn them, and making confession and satisfaction, achieve full repentance. He loves the clear preaching of His Gospel, the declaration of His doings for

Bengel.  
 Delitzsch.

Bellarmino.

C.

Haymo.  
 S. Bruno  
 Carth.

C.



- mankind. *Thou hast prepared equity, Thou hast executed judgment and righteousness.* These words recur in the Proverbs, where the instruction of wisdom is explained as being "justice, and judgment, and equity;" whence it is clear that some noteworthy distinction exists between the terms. The Carmelite points out that the precepts of the Mosaic code may all be reduced under three heads of moral, judicial, and ritual statutes, and declares that these are what God established in *Jacob*. A writer of a later day suggests that the first term applies to regulations for promoting peace and amity; the second, to all matters of jurisprudence, especially in criminal law; the third, to contracts and bargains between man and man. He executed *judgment* in *Jacob*, when He punished His people by captivity, and *righteousness* when He brought them again out of Babylon, pardoned and restored. He did the like, judging *Jacob* by the hands of *Vespasian* and *Hadrian*; He will do the like, righteously granting restoration to the remnant of *Israel* when the fulness of the *Gentiles* has come in.
- Prov. i. 3.      Thou hast prepared equity, Thou hast executed judgment and righteousness.
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5 O magnify the LORD our God : and fall down before his footstool, for he is holy.

- S. Basil. M. Theodoret. 1 Chron. xxviii. 2. Isa. lx. 13.      The first reference is to the Ark, just below the Mercy-seat of the Temple of Jerusalem, the special place of God's abode under the Law, and it is now a call to worship in any of the countless churches dedicated in His honour under the Gospel. The Vulgate reading, however, is *Worship His footstool, for it is holy*; although there is a variant, agreeing with LXX. *He is holy*. And for the most part, they agree in explaining this *footstool* to be the Sacred Humanity of CHRIST, "For God, being exalted, and bowing all creation under His feet, became unchangeably Man, united to our nature, which is His footstool." We adore Him indivisibly, because, although His human Body is a created thing, yet it is inseparably joined to the eternal Godhead and the WORD. And observe, that whereas the Word of God lay within the Ark, inscribed on the stone tables of the Law, so the living Word was enshrined in the true Ark of the Covenant, the Manhood of the LORD JESUS. Others, looking to that saying, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool," bid us see here either *Golgotha*, the spot which lay below the feet of our crucified LORD, or the Cross itself, that hard footstool, to which His sacred feet were nailed. There is a further sense, which S. Augustine discusses at length. How can we, asks the Saint, adore the earth, God's footstool, when Scripture plainly says, "Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God?" I am in doubt; I fear to worship the earth, lest He Who made heaven and earth should condemn me. Again, I am afraid not to worship my LORD's footstool because the Psalm tells me, *Worship His footstool*. In my hesitation I turn to
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- S. John Damasc.      We adore Him indivisibly, because, although His human Body is a created thing, yet it is inseparably joined to the eternal Godhead and the WORD. And observe, that whereas the Word of God lay within the Ark, inscribed on the stone tables of the Law, so the living Word was enshrined in the true Ark of the Covenant, the Manhood of the LORD JESUS. Others, looking to that saying, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool," bid us see here either *Golgotha*, the spot which lay below the feet of our crucified LORD, or the Cross itself, that hard footstool, to which His sacred feet were nailed. There is a further sense, which S. Augustine discusses at length. How can we, asks the Saint, adore the earth, God's footstool, when Scripture plainly says, "Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God?" I am in doubt; I fear to worship the earth, lest He Who made heaven and earth should condemn me. Again, I am afraid not to worship my LORD's footstool because the Psalm tells me, *Worship His footstool*. In my hesitation I turn to
- Bellarmino.      We adore Him indivisibly, because, although His human Body is a created thing, yet it is inseparably joined to the eternal Godhead and the WORD. And observe, that whereas the Word of God lay within the Ark, inscribed on the stone tables of the Law, so the living Word was enshrined in the true Ark of the Covenant, the Manhood of the LORD JESUS. Others, looking to that saying, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool," bid us see here either *Golgotha*, the spot which lay below the feet of our crucified LORD, or the Cross itself, that hard footstool, to which His sacred feet were nailed. There is a further sense, which S. Augustine discusses at length. How can we, asks the Saint, adore the earth, God's footstool, when Scripture plainly says, "Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God?" I am in doubt; I fear to worship the earth, lest He Who made heaven and earth should condemn me. Again, I am afraid not to worship my LORD's footstool because the Psalm tells me, *Worship His footstool*. In my hesitation I turn to
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- Pseudo-Hieron.      We adore Him indivisibly, because, although His human Body is a created thing, yet it is inseparably joined to the eternal Godhead and the WORD. And observe, that whereas the Word of God lay within the Ark, inscribed on the stone tables of the Law, so the living Word was enshrined in the true Ark of the Covenant, the Manhood of the LORD JESUS. Others, looking to that saying, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool," bid us see here either *Golgotha*, the spot which lay below the feet of our crucified LORD, or the Cross itself, that hard footstool, to which His sacred feet were nailed. There is a further sense, which S. Augustine discusses at length. How can we, asks the Saint, adore the earth, God's footstool, when Scripture plainly says, "Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God?" I am in doubt; I fear to worship the earth, lest He Who made heaven and earth should condemn me. Again, I am afraid not to worship my LORD's footstool because the Psalm tells me, *Worship His footstool*. In my hesitation I turn to
- Z.      We adore Him indivisibly, because, although His human Body is a created thing, yet it is inseparably joined to the eternal Godhead and the WORD. And observe, that whereas the Word of God lay within the Ark, inscribed on the stone tables of the Law, so the living Word was enshrined in the true Ark of the Covenant, the Manhood of the LORD JESUS. Others, looking to that saying, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool," bid us see here either *Golgotha*, the spot which lay below the feet of our crucified LORD, or the Cross itself, that hard footstool, to which His sacred feet were nailed. There is a further sense, which S. Augustine discusses at length. How can we, asks the Saint, adore the earth, God's footstool, when Scripture plainly says, "Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God?" I am in doubt; I fear to worship the earth, lest He Who made heaven and earth should condemn me. Again, I am afraid not to worship my LORD's footstool because the Psalm tells me, *Worship His footstool*. In my hesitation I turn to
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- Deut. vi. 13.      We adore Him indivisibly, because, although His human Body is a created thing, yet it is inseparably joined to the eternal Godhead and the WORD. And observe, that whereas the Word of God lay within the Ark, inscribed on the stone tables of the Law, so the living Word was enshrined in the true Ark of the Covenant, the Manhood of the LORD JESUS. Others, looking to that saying, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool," bid us see here either *Golgotha*, the spot which lay below the feet of our crucified LORD, or the Cross itself, that hard footstool, to which His sacred feet were nailed. There is a further sense, which S. Augustine discusses at length. How can we, asks the Saint, adore the earth, God's footstool, when Scripture plainly says, "Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God?" I am in doubt; I fear to worship the earth, lest He Who made heaven and earth should condemn me. Again, I am afraid not to worship my LORD's footstool because the Psalm tells me, *Worship His footstool*. In my hesitation I turn to
- S. Matt. iv. 10.      We adore Him indivisibly, because, although His human Body is a created thing, yet it is inseparably joined to the eternal Godhead and the WORD. And observe, that whereas the Word of God lay within the Ark, inscribed on the stone tables of the Law, so the living Word was enshrined in the true Ark of the Covenant, the Manhood of the LORD JESUS. Others, looking to that saying, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool," bid us see here either *Golgotha*, the spot which lay below the feet of our crucified LORD, or the Cross itself, that hard footstool, to which His sacred feet were nailed. There is a further sense, which S. Augustine discusses at length. How can we, asks the Saint, adore the earth, God's footstool, when Scripture plainly says, "Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God?" I am in doubt; I fear to worship the earth, lest He Who made heaven and earth should condemn me. Again, I am afraid not to worship my LORD's footstool because the Psalm tells me, *Worship His footstool*. In my hesitation I turn to



CHRIST, for I seek Himself here, and I find how the earth can be worshipped without impiety. For He took earth from earth, for flesh is of earth, and He took Flesh from the flesh of Mary. And because He walked here in that flesh, and gave us that very Flesh to eat for our salvation; and no one eats that Flesh unless he first worship, a way is found whereby this footstool of the LORD can be worshipped; and we not only do not sin in worshipping, but we sin if we do not worship. Does the flesh then quicken? The LORD Himself said when He was speaking to teach concerning the same earth, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." Therefore, when thou bowest and prostratest thyself before that earth, look not upon It as earth, but that Holy One whose footstool thou worshippest, for it is for His sake thou dost worship.

S. John vi.  
63.

Of this most holy Sacrament the Ark of the Covenant was a type; for it was framed of incorruptible wood; it had above it the golden Mercy-seat, sustained by cherubim, it had within it the priestly rod of Aaron, the pot of manna, the tables of the Law; it was by its presence and might that the people passed over Jordan, and the walls of Jericho fell down; it was death for the profane to touch it, stand near it, or even look upon it, and it was treated with holy reverence by the Hebrews. Cardinal Hugo and Ayguan enumerate many other footstools of the LORD, as the Blessed Virgin, the Church, the Angels, the land of Israel, the souls of the penitent; and all those enemies of CHRIST whom the FATHER makes His footstool, by casting them bound at His feet, as the discrowned Valerian lay before his conqueror Sapor.

L.

Hugo Card.  
Ay.

Ps. cx. 1.

6 Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among such as call upon his Name: these called upon the LORD, and he heard them.

Richard of S. Victor, reminding us that Moses appears chiefly as Legislator, Aaron as Priest, and Samuel as Prophet, bids us see in them the types of the discretion, devotion, and foresight, which befit all true servants of God. But two other views show lessons of warning, rather than of encouragement, from the mention of these names. To the Jews, rejecting the kingdom of CHRIST, they recall the memory of the rebellion against the two great brothers in the wilderness, the demand for a King like those of the nations around, in the place of the Theocracy. To us, should we indulge in spiritual pride, the same names tell of the deaths on Hor and Nebo, outside the Land of Promise, in punishment of the hasty words and acts of Moses and Aaron at the waters of strife; and of the fall and apostasy of Samuel's sons. It is to be noticed that Moses is certainly, and Samuel perhaps by implication, included here amongst the *priests*. It is clear that the former discharged all the chief sacerdotal functions

Ric. Victor.  
in loc.

S. Basil. M.  
Theodoret.

Cajetanus.

L.  
Exod. xxiv.  
6.



Levit. viii.  
1 Sam. i. 1.  
1 Chron. vi.  
23.  
1 Sam. vii.  
9.  
1 Sam. ix.  
13.  
S. Cyprian.  
S. Thomas  
Aquinas.  
S. Athana-  
sius.  
S. Chrysost.  
The Gloss.

Honorius.

Ay.

Exod. xxxii.  
Numb. xvi.  
1 Sam. vii.  
S. Hieron.  
in Joel c. 2.

until, and inclusive of, the consecration of Aaron and his sons, and Samuel (whose genealogy is variously ascribed to Ephraim and the Kohathite family of Levi;) if he did not actually offer sacrifice himself, as the literal wording of one passage seems to imply, at any rate attended to utter prayers and blessings at the oblation; and it is as a man of prevalent might in prayer that he, the "Heard of God," most frequently comes before us in Holy Writ, albeit many of the Fathers held that he was a Priest too, by special dispensation of the Lord. The names too, in their special meaning, show us how these three great Saints serve as types of different faculties of the faithful soul. *Moses*, "drawn out" of the waters, tells of withdrawal from worldly pleasure and cares; *Aaron*, "shining light," of intense illumination by the grace of God; Samuel, "asked, or heard of God," perseverance and victory in prayer, whence we see, moreover, that the qualities, as well as the offices, of these three rulers of Israel converge in that Lord Jesus on Whom they called in prayer long centuries before He came in the flesh. He not only *heard* them, as the Prayer Book version reads, but *answered* them (Targ. Syr. A. V.) as we find again and again declared in Scripture, whence S. Jerome draws the lesson, that it is no light or easy thing to call effectively on God, but an effort which tasks the powers of His most perfect servants.

7 He spake unto them also out of the cloudy pillar: for they kept his testimonies, and the law that he gave them.

L.  
Exod. xix. 9;  
xxxiii. 9.

Numb. xii.  
5.

R. Kimchi.  
Lyranus.  
Agellius.

1 Sam. iii. 2.  
Bellarmine.  
Apollinaris.

Ay.

Ecclus.  
xxiv. 4.

Isa. xxv. 4.

Haymo.

So we read, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak unto thee, and believe thee for ever." And again: "As Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and the Lord talked with Moses." Once more, "The Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Moses." There is no express testimony of the same kind touching Samuel; but there is a Rabbinical tradition that a pillar of cloud stood at his door, when Saul and the servant went to inquire of him for the lost asses. Others suggest that the darkness of the night when God first revealed Himself to the child Samuel in the tabernacle may be here referred to; or again, that the oracular vision commonly manifested itself amidst the smoke of the incense in the Holy place. But in the deepest mystical sense, that cloudy pillar out of which God spake was Eternal Wisdom, Who saith, "My throne is in a cloudy pillar," Who veiled Himself in type and figure under the Law, and was seen shrouded in the form of a Man under the Gospel, that form wherein He is "a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall;" and is the pillar which supports



the whole building of the Church. *For they kept His testimonies*, in observing the ceremonial code which He delivered, *and the law which He gave them* in the Decalogue for their moral guidance. Or, as another will have it, the *testimonies* are the common regulations binding on all, while the *law* given to *them* refers to the special instructions conveyed to Moses and Aaron for the right government of the people. To us it has a different meaning: "A new com-  
mandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." And upon this follow the two promises: "He that hath My mandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My FATHER, and I will love him, and manifest Myself to him;" and again, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Ric. Hamp.

Bellarmino.

C.

S. John xiii. 34.

S. John xiv. 21.

S. John xv. 7.

8 Thou heardest them, O LORD our God : thou forgavest them, O God, and punishedst their own inventions.

There are two varying explanations of this verse. That which is more profoundly spiritual, and also simpler as a matter of construction, is that which refers the whole verse to Moses, Aaron, and Samuel; and points out that in nothing did He show His love and regard for them more than in chastising them for their sins—Moses for his anger at the rock, Aaron for his making the golden calf, Samuel for repeating the error of Eli in permitting the misconduct of his sons. By all the trials and contradictions they all bore at the hands of the rebellious people, by the exclusion of Moses and Aaron from the Holy Land, by the deposition of Samuel from his rank as Judge, God purified them from their sins, and scourged them as a loving FATHER. The other view, adopted by the Greeks, and by many others, refers all the latter clause not to the three great Saints, but to the whole people of Israel who murmured and rebelled against them, and who were punished on the one hand by the fire and plague in the wilderness, and on the other by the tyranny of Saul, contrasted with the gentle sway of the Theocracy. But in either case there is a profound lesson to be drawn from the close connection of the two words, *forgavest* and *punishedst*, teaching us that God's pardon of sin is proved by His chastisements, as we read in Nathan's address to David, "The LORD also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." And this God does not only for the immediate correction of sin, but for the perfecting of holiness; as it is written by the Apostle: "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of

A.

S. Basil. M.  
Theodoret.  
Z.

D. C.

2 Sam. xii. 13.

C.

1 Cor. xii. 7.



the revelations, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to afflict me, lest I should be exalted above measure."

9 O magnify the LORD our God, and worship him upon his holy hill : for the LORD our God is holy.

- R. Kimchi. This the Rabbins explain as a summons to the solemn rites celebrated on Mount Moriah, whence it is transferred by Christians to the Church Universal, high upon the holy hills, and to "Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." This is the mountain which began as a stone cut out without hands, and which grew into a great mountain that filleth the whole earth, a mountain upon which they only worship who are in the Catholic Church. And as this Church is the mystical Body of CHRIST, so His sacred Humanity, His natural Body, is also the holy hill of God, wherein and whereby alone we worship, and that in the lofty spirit of a true and exalted faith, *for the Lord our God is Holy*, thrice Holy, as we find Him named in this Psalm, and in His pure worship are found none of the foul rites and dark superstitions of the heathen.
- A. Dan. ii. 34. Wherefore :
- S. Bruno Carth. Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD our God; glory be to the Son, Who loveth judgment; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Whose Name is Holy.
- Ay. Arnobius. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

- Ludolph. O God, high upon the throne, we pray and beseech Thee, that having the pillar of light shining upon us, we may, by Thy protection, keep to the rule of the priestly order. (1.)
- Mozarabic. O LORD our Redeemer, Who art supposed to be high above every lofty thing, and great in Sion, increase and perfect the belief of Thy Church in Thee, and make the nations to unite in the sincerity thereof, that as we are confessing Thy Name, which is great, and with faithful service paying honour to Thy kingly glory, Thou mayest graciously look upon us from on high, and bring us from this low place of earth to the dwellings of heaven. (11.)
- D. C. O God, Who art high above all people, be gracious unto Thy servants; grant, we beseech Thee, that we may keep Thy testimonies, and the holy laws Thou gavest us, that observing them devoutly unto the end, we may obtain reward from Thee in a blessed eternity. (1.)



## PSALM C.

**TITLE.** A Psalm of praise (or thanksgiving, Marg.) LXX. and Vulgate: A Psalm of confession. Chaldee Targum: A song for the sacrifice of thanksgiving.

## ARGUMENT.

**ARG. THOMAS.** That we, made by CHRIST, ought to rejoice, serve and play unto Him. The Voice of the Apostles to the people. An exhortation to gratitude, that we should serve God.

**VEN. BEDE.** Whereas the word *Confession* is often set down in the Psalm according to the particular occasion, here it is, however, inscribed by itself in the title, because the whole of this Psalm belongs to the two kinds of *Confession*, to wit, of penitence and of praise.

In the first part of the Psalm the Prophet exhorts all creation to praise the LORD with exultation. *O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands.* And lest thou shouldst suppose that this kind of confession is always to be used, he promises us in the second part that if we repent of our sins we can enter through the gates of His forgiveness. *O go your way into His gates.*

**SYRIAC PSALTER.** Anonymous. Concerning Joshua, the son of Nun, when he quelled the war of the Amorites. But in the New Testament, concerning the conversion of the Gentiles to the Faith.

**EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA.** The calling of the Gentiles.

**S. ATHANASIUS.** A Psalm of rejoicing.

## VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian.* Sunday: Lauds. Saturday: Matins.

*Monastic.* Friday: II. Nocturn.

*Ambrosian.* Thursday of Second Week: III. Nocturn.

*Parisian.* Sunday: Lauds.

*Lyons.* Sunday: Lauds.

*Quignon.* Thursday: Lauds.

## ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* Saturday: O be joyful in the LORD, \* all ye lands.

*Monastic.* The same.

*Ambrosian.* As Psalm xviiii.

*Parisian.* Serve the LORD \* with gladness: be ye sure that the LORD He is GOD.

*Lyons.* O go \* into the gates of the LORD with confession, and into His courts with hymns.

*Mozarabic.* First verse.

This Psalm, observes S. Augustine, is brief, and by no means obscure. Its verses are few, but weighty in the importance of their matter; let them bring forth seed in your hearts, that a granary

A.



may be prepared for the harvest of the LORD. This Psalm of Confession commands and exhorts us for this end, that we rejoice in GOD. Nor does it exhort any one corner of the earth, nor yet any one or other dwelling or assembly of mankind, but because He knows that He hath sown blessing everywhere, He requires rejoicing on all sides.

Agellius.

The Psalm is properly a liturgical one, and from its wording appears to have been especially intended for the sacrifices of thank-offering, made with an oblation of fine flour; and it is thus a prophecy of the one offering of the Holy Eucharist, to be made, not by Aaronic priests in Jerusalem alone, but by Gentile priests and Levites in every country of the world.

**I O be joyful in the LORD, all ye lands : serve the LORD with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.**

S. Pet.  
Chrysol.  
Serm. 6.

As when the younger son returned, the whole household joined in the dance and sang a heavenly melody, so we ought to take this Psalm, give the timbrel, touch the merry harp with the lute. What is it that demands such rejoicing? Why should earth be called to exultation and gladness after the utterance of the terrible and wonderful precepts of GOD? Because that awful Deity chose as His own the office of the meek shepherd, and clad Himself in a shepherd's form, to gather, in His mercy, the wandering nations, the straying people, the tribes scattered far and wide, as lost sheep into one fold. As the terrible trumpet summons the warrior to battle, so the sweet sound of rejoicing calls the sheep to their pasture. And as CHRIST, coming to earth, cries out, "I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep;" He seeks for helpers and companions in His charge of all that world whereof He is Master, saying, *O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands.* All are invited, there is no acceptance of persons, the summons is to all that labour and are heavy laden, that they may rejoice, and trust in no perishable good, but in the LORD. The plural verb, joined to a singular noun, as the text stands in Hebrew, LXX., and Vulgate, points to the union of all the races of mankind in one harmonious chorus of praise. *Serve the Lord.* All service is full of bitterness, all who are tied down to a servile condition serve and murmur. Be not afraid that GOD's service will be such; there will be in it no sighing, no mourning, no wrath. None will ask to be sold from thence, for it is sweet to know that we all are ransomed. It is great happiness to be a servant in that house, even if fettered. The LORD's service is free, because not necessity but love serves therein, "for, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Let love make thee a servant, because the truth hath made thee free. *With gladness,*

S. John x.  
11.

Arnobius.

C.

A.

Gal. v. 13.

S. John viii.  
31.  
Hugo Card.



"not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver;" *with gladness*, because "the sorrow of the world worketh death." There is good reason for this gladness, because man has passed from his wretched, hopeless, fearful slavery under sin, idols, evil spirits, to the easy yoke of his Maker, to the tenderness of a FATHER, to the free service of the one good LORD. And thus the Saints observe in a phrase embodied since in the Collects of the Western Church, that to serve Him is to reign, and as Boëthius says very well, to be guided by His bridle is perfect freedom. *With gladness*, for he who serves unwillingly makes a slavery for himself, but if thou put good-will into thy service, thou wilt find that thou art not God's servant, but His son. And fitness for God's service involves many things: bodily purity and cleanliness, reputableness of character, orderliness, sparingness in living and substance, humility and reverence, cheerfulness and gladness, since all these qualities answer to attributes of the Master we propose to serve.

s. Pet.  
Chrysol.  
Serm. 1.  
SS. Ambros.  
& August.  
Ep. x. 84.  
Boeth. de  
Cons. Phil.  
l. 5.  
S. Valerius,  
Serm. de  
Arcta Vita.  
Ay.

*And come before His presence.* It is *come in before His presence* in LXX. and Vulgate, denoting entrance within the Temple bounds. And hereupon we are reminded of the several ways of coming in to God. We should come, as doves into the windows of CHRIST's wounds, "Come away, O my dove, into the clefts of the rock," "as the doves to their windows." As a flock into the sheepfold, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring." As the timid into a fortified camp, "Let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there." As men pardoned, into penitence, "I will give him the valley of Achor for a door of hope." As a prince into his dignity, "The prince shall enter in by the way of the porch." "There shall enter into the gates of the city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David." As conquerors into a captured city, "They said, Show us the entrance into the city." And JESUS said, "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by storm." As a procession into a church, "They shall enter into My sanctuary, and they shall come near to My table." As the elect into glory, The LORD saith, "Enter thou into the joy of thy LORD," and we add, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest." This we are to do *with a song*, the fit wedding garment for the marriage of the King's Son. And yet Archangels tremble, Angels fear, Powers are filled with dread, the elders fall down in the face of heaven, the elements fly, the rocks melt, the mountains flow down, the earth quakes, and shall man, who is earth, enter thus fearlessly, and stand upright, rejoicing? How can the Prophet be bold to say that this is what we ought to do? Because of the words which follow:

Ay.  
Hugo Card.  
Cant. II. 13.  
Isa. lx. 8.  
S. John x. 16.  
Jer. viii. 14.  
Hosea II. 15.  
Ezek. xlv. 3.  
Jer. xvii. 25.  
Judg. i. 24.  
S. Matt. xi. 12.  
Ezek. xlv. 16.  
S. Matt. xxv. 21.  
Heb. iv. 11.  
L.  
S. Pet.  
Chrysol.  
Serm. 6.

2 Be ye sure that the LORD he is GOD : it is he



that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

The Complutensian LXX., Syriac, and some copies of the Vulgate read *He is our God*, although this is not essential to the meaning, which comes out with sufficient clearness in the last clause. There is also an important variant in several Hebrew copies, supported by the Targum, Aquila, S. Jerome, and R. Saadia, which, instead of *not we ourselves*, runs *and we are His*.<sup>1</sup> It is because the LORD JESUS is GOD, Who was a little child in our flesh, Who lay cradled as a mortal babe, Who, rocked peacefully on His Mother's bosom, was gentle and meek in His converse with us, laying aside all the terrors of His Godhead, all His awfulness as Judge, that we are bold to enter into His presence with a song, going to meet the welcome embraces of a loving FATHER, not the searching examination of our secret faults. Think not meanly of that LORD, for though ye crucified Him, scourged Him, spat upon Him, crowned Him with thorns, clad Him in a robe of scorn, hung Him on a tree, pierced Him with nails, smote Him with a lance, set guards at His sepulchre, He is GOD.

S. Pet.  
Chrysol.  
Serm. 6.

A.

F. W. Faber.

JESUS is GOD! the glorious bands  
Of golden Angels sing  
Songs of adoring praise to Him,  
Their Maker and their King.  
He was True GOD in Bethlehem's crib,  
On Calvary's Cross True GOD,  
He Who in heaven eternal reigned,  
In time on earth abode.

JESUS is GOD! If on the earth  
This blessed faith decays,  
More tender must our love become,  
More plentiful our praise.  
We are not Angels, but we may  
Down in earth's corners kneel,  
And multiply sweet acts of love,  
And murmur what we feel.

S. John i. 3. *It is He that hath made us*, for "by Him were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made." He made us in our first creation of nature, He made us also in the second and more glorious creation of grace. Human pride or human science may speak in the spirit of "Pharaoh, king of Egypt, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself;" but the servants of GOD will say, *Not we ourselves*, for "O LORD, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand." Not less precise is the testi-

Honorius.

R. Saadia.  
Agellius.

Isa. lxiiv. 8.

<sup>1</sup> This is the *Keri* reading *וְהוּא*, instead of the *Cethib* *אֵל*.



mony of Holy Writ to the sole operation of God in that creation of grace whereby we are made His people, for He saith by the Prophet, "Bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth; every one that is called by My Name; for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." If we take the other reading, *And we are His*, it teaches us that He not only made us, but made us for Himself, to be His very own, and that He has not resigned His claims over us, nor we chosen Him first. And therefore, because of this close mutual relation, the Bride exclaims, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." This it is to be *His people*, serving Him with intelligent obedience, with confident love, and *the sheep of His pasture*, because we constitute His inheritance and His wealth; we need His guidance, are ruled, cared for, and preserved by Him. We find Him so loving and tender that we cannot forget Him, we seek Him with sighs and yearning, we know and hear His voice, and follow Him, but no other. The Carmelite, by reason of the liturgical expressions in the succeeding verse, is inclined to limit the latter clause of this one to the Christian ministry, God's *people*, as specially engaged in His service, the *sheep of His pasture*, as living upon the tithes and oblations offered in His honour by the body of the faithful. But, bearing in mind that all Christians are "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," we shall not need so to restrict the phrase, and will rather see in the pasture a reference to the food of His own Body and Blood, wherewith the Good Shepherd feeds us in the wide and pleasant meadows of His Church, as He once fed Israel in the pleasant fields of Canaan.

Isa. xliii. 6.

Cant. vi. 3.

Cocceius.

Ay.

D. C.

1 S. Pet. ii.

Agellius.

3 O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.

The Rabbinical interpretation of this verse is that, in the days of Messiah, all the sacrifices of the Law will be done away save the thank-offering of flour or bread, so that the coarse rites of the slaughter of animal victims, suggestive of pollution and sin, shall have no place under the New Covenant. How precisely this accords with the accomplished fact of the substitution of the Eucharistic Sacrifice for the bulls, sheep, and goats of the Law, in accordance with the prophecy of Malachi, need not be dwelt on at length.

R. David.  
R. Johanan.  
R. Kimchi.  
Genebrardus.

Mal. i. 11.

Enough the blood of victims flowed of old,  
The shadows pass, and legal offerings;  
Now higher ministries Thou, LORD, dost mould,  
On which a holier shade Thy Priesthood flings.

Brev. Paris.  
The Hymn,  
Jam satis  
suavit cruor  
hostiarum.

Elias from the heavens called down the flame;  
One greater than Elias, hid from sight,



Is here : obedient to His awful Name,  
Of Him we make the dread memorial-rite.

Great office, the mysterious Cup to bear  
In which the guilty world's salvation lies,  
And with our trembling hands full of deep fear  
To offer up the bloodless Sacrifice.

The ambiguity of the term *confession*, here put, as usual, for *thanksgiving* by LXX. and Vulgate, leads to various other expositions of the verse.

A.

S. Augustine teaches us wisely that repentance must be the outset of the service of God, into whose *gates* we enter with confession of sins, not attempting to burst forth in the language of praise till in the advance of our spiritual improvement we penetrate into His *courts*. Not essentially different

Hugo Card.

from this is the view which takes the *gates* to be the Sacraments of the Church, especially Holy Baptism, as the entrance of that Church, each of which is fittingly preceded by confession of sins. Another reminding us, that the Lord

Pseudo-  
Hieron.

has called Himself the Door, explains these gates of the Apostles and other holy teachers, His messengers, to bring

Eusebius.  
Philip de la  
Grève,  
Serm. 207.

men to Him, by whom, therefore, they enter in to Him, making confession first and renunciation of all their sins in the time of their ignorance. And after this strait and painful entrance, we should go at once into the spacious *courts* of

Acts xvi. 30.

charity, passing from the narrow exclusiveness of the question, "What must I do to be saved?" to the embracing love

Rom. x. 1.

of that other saying, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved," passing into the width

D. C.

of heavenly contemplation, and that in the secret recesses

P.

Hugo Card.

of our hearts and consciences. There is a stress on *His* gates, which are many, that we may learn to distinguish them from gates which are not His, by which men often enter in

Isa. xxxix. 13.

confession. There is the gate of hypocrisy; of which we read, "This people draw near with their mouth, and with

S. Luke

their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me." Pride: "I am not as other men are." Despair:

xviii. 11.

"I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood."

S. Matt.

Treachery: "Master, we know that Thou art true." Flattery:

xxvii. 4;

"Thou art good in my sight as an angel of God."

xxii. 16.

Mockery: "Hail, King of the Jews." Compulsion: "I

1 Sam. xxix.

know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God." Sacrilege:

9.

"Unto the ungodly saith God, Why dost thou preach

S. Matt.

My laws?"

xxvii. 39.

Opposed to all these gates of the evil one, are the twelve

S. Mark i.

gates of the City of God, named from the twelve tribes of

24.

Israel. On the north, the type of sin, lie Reuben, Judah,

Ps. l. 16.

and Levi. Reuben, "behold a son," is the prodigal returning to show himself to his FATHER; Judah, "confession" or "praise," the giving God the glory by acknowledgment of sin; Levi, "joined," is the being united to the Church of

Rev. xxi. 12.



God by the abandonment of pagan error. On the east, the region of light and progress, are Joseph, the "increase" in good works; Benjamin, trust in the "right hand" of God alone, and desire for the good things set there; Dan, reverent thought of the coming of the "Judge." On the south, where the warmest rays fall, and thus the emblem of those perfected in love, are Simeon, Issachar, Zebulon. Simeon, "heard" in prayer; Issachar, the "hireling," who has accepted the summons of the householder, and has entered His vineyard to labour in certainty of reward; Zebulon, "dwelling," because they shall go out no more, but dwell in the courts of the Lord's house. And on the west, towards the sunseting, type of death, are Gad, Asher, Naphtali. Gad, the "troop," denotes the "innumerable company of angels" and saints. Asher, their "blessedness" in the vision of God. Naphtali, "a wrestler," reminds us that the violent have taken His kingdom by storm, and that no one is crowned unless he have conquered. And these are the gates through which God's true servants must enter in confession.

**Heb. xii. 22.**

*When God's true servants must enter in confession.*  
*Be thankful unto Him, and speak good of His Name.* This is a higher praise than our songs while we were still passing through the courts; it is the thank-offering in the Holy Place itself, where we approach the presence of God. And thus it here denotes the service of heaven, to which the local Churches of earth are but the courts and vestibules, that service wherein the redeemed will praise for ever the Name of Jesus, in that

**S. Pet.**  
**Chrysol.**

L

**Theodoret.**

**S. Pet.**  
**Chrysol.**

endless evening that remains  
 Amongst those white flocks and celestial trains  
 That feed upon their Shepherd's eyes, and frame  
 That heavenly music of so wondrous fame,  
 Psalming aloud the holy honours of His Name!

**Giles  
Fletcher,  
Christ's  
Victory.**

**4 For the LORD is gracious, his mercy is everlasting : and his truth endureth from generation to generation.**

He is *gracious*, for He can never be so wroth with a sinner as not at once to be appeased by sincere confession of sin, gracious with that tender compassion which induced Him to take away the sins of the world. He is *sweet* (Vulg.) for in Him is no bitter at all, and thus an ancient Christian poet invokes Him :

Av.

7

**U.**  
**S. Det.**

**S. Pet.**  
**Chrysol.**

## Only 50¢. Pseudo-

**Hieron.**

O nomen perdulce mihi, lux, et decus, et spes,  
Blandus in ore sapor, fragrans odor, irriguus fons.

**Prudentius.**  
**Apoth.**

O Name, sweetest to me, my light, my hope, and my glory,  
Savoury taste in the mouth, true fragrancy, watering fountain.

*His mercy is everlasting*, because, on the one hand, He extends the acceptable time, the day of salvation, to the end

**Honorius.**



of the world for all, to the end of life for each sinner, rejecting none, and not closing the door of grace till the last necessary moment; and on the other, He will keep His redeemed in heaven secure in the blessed necessity of sinlessness. *And His truth endureth from generation to generation*, because the promise He made to the Patriarchs He fulfilled in their descendants, by coming in person, no longer in type and prophecy; because His words in Holy Writ shall never pass away, even when heaven and earth are gone; because He keeps to the uttermost in this world and the next the pledge He has given to His disciples of bestowing everlasting blessedness.

Hugo Card.  
Theodoret.

D. C.  
A.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is gracious, for He hath given His SON for us; glory be to the SON, Whose mercy is everlasting, as He ever pleads for us the death which He endured for our sakes; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Comforter and Teacher of the Church, Whose truth endureth from generation to generation of Christians unto the end of the world.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

Ludolph. We rejoice in Thee, O LORD everlasting, with gladness and exultation, beseeching Thee, that while the gates of our hearts are thrown open in Thy praise, they may also be flung wide to receive Thy mercy and truth. (1.)

Mozarabic. Inspire our hearts, O LORD, that we may praise Thy Name, for Thou art gracious, and that our earth may be filled with Thy prayer. And let Thy mercy, moreover, protect us, that Thy revealed truth may make us glad for evermore. (11.)

Mozarabic. Let us, O LORD, who serve Thee in fear, enter Thy gates with confession, and into Thy courts with hymns and confessions; let us praise Thy Name, for Thou art gracious, and inspire Thou our hearts, that our mouth may be opened wide in Thy praises, and that Thy boundless truth may prevail for evermore. (11.)

D. C. O God, eternal glory of the heavens, make us enter Thy gates with confession, and Thy courts with hymns, that giving thanks to Thy majesty, we may receive at Thy hands the crown of life, which Thou hast promised to them that love Thee. (1.)



## PSALM CI.

TITLE. A Psalm of David.

## ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, after the Judgment, will destroy the ungodly with early vengeance. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER, or the Voice of the Church to CHRIST. The Voice of the Apostles to the FATHER touching the repose of the Saints. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER, touching the repose and expectation of the righteous. The Voice of CHRIST to the FATHER, touching the relics of the Saints. Of Penitence with Praise.

VEN. BEDÆ. The title is familiar, and the Psalm itself is enclosed in the form of perfect holiness, and may look for the hundred-fold fruit of reward.

In the first part of the Psalm the Church saith that she sings of mercy and judgment unto the LORD, and avoids the fellowship of the wicked. *My song shall be of mercy and judgment : unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing.* In the second part, she declares that she loves the faithful, and delights in dwelling with them, but that she drives from her heart the evil spirits with their suggestions, and knows that they have no portion with the servants of GOD. *Mine eyes look upon such as are faithful.*

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of Asaph. An exhortation of David concerning those things which are required in the ministry of the LORD's house. And a prophecy concerning the praise of him who hath conquered and been made perfect in GOD.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. A hymn of the man who is perfect after GOD.

## VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian.* Saturday : Matins.

*Monastic.* Friday : II. Nocturn. [Common of Apostles : II. Nocturn.]

*Ambrosian.* Thursday of Second Week : III. Nocturn.

*Parisian.* Tuesday : Matins.

*Lyons.* Saturday : Sext.

*Quignon.* Thursday : Nones.

*Eastern Church.* Third Psalm at Prime.

## ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* As preceding Psalm. [*Monastic.* Common of Apostles : They walked in the innocence of their heart, in the midst of Thine house.]

*Ambrosian.* As Psalm 98.

*Parisian.* I have set no\* wicked thing before mine eyes, whose privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I destroy.

*Mosarabic.* In the morning, O LORD, destroy all our sins.



1 My song shall be of mercy and judgment : unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.

Lyranus.  
Cajetanus.  
Ewald.

S. Basil. M.  
Theodoret.  
Z.

The general view of the Rabbinical commentators, acquiesced in by the great majority of modern critics, is that this Psalm belongs to the commencement of David's reign, when God had shown mercy to him, and wreaked judgment on the house of Saul ; when David's supremacy was fully acknowledged, but whilst much of the work of organization and construction of the new polity remained to be completed ; and that it lays down therefore in regular order the principles of government which the king purposed to apply to himself, to his immediate household, to the capital city, and the whole country under his sway. The Greek Fathers appear inclined to assign it to Josiah, with whose character and actions it is in complete accord, but there seems no adequate reason for disputing the authenticity of the title. Its mystical purport, as signifying the holy resolutions of any saint, is confirmed by S. Athanasius and S. Chrysostom, with many others, dwelling frequently on its place, the hundredth Psalm in the LXX. and Vulgate computation, as implying so much. The most usual treatment of it, however, is as a discourse on the qualities and duties of a good king, and there is one commentary upon it, with this end, from the pen of one Antonio Velasquez, a Spanish Jesuit, constituting a folio volume of between four and five hundred pages, published at Antwerp in 1640.

A.

*Mercy* is set first, and then *judgment*, because this life is the time of grace, and the next world the place of sentence ; since had the LORD come first as Judge, instead of coming as SAVIOUR, there would have been none able to abide His inquiry, none capable of receiving a reward. The two attributes are so blended in God that we cannot separate them, and therefore despairing sinners may hence learn to hope, proud and obstinate ones to fear. We are taught too that *mercy*, the deeds of love and gentleness, almsgiving and other good works, is that which will enable those who have practised it to obtain it themselves in the judgment, so that they shall sing thankfully to God ; whereas of the hard and pitiless the Apostle tells us, "He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy, and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." In the mouth of the King, the words denote two great maxims which are to guide his reign. So a heathen poet too :

C.

Arnobius.

S. James ii.  
13.

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Virg. Æn.  
vi. 851.

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento,  
(Hæ tibi erunt artes) pacique imponere morem,  
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.

Thou, Roman, bear in mind to rule with sway  
The nations, and to fix the bounds of peace,  
(These be thine arts) to spare those once subdued,  
And rout in war the proud.



Such ought to be the policy of every Christian ruler, be he prince or prelate, and of every preacher too, who by mingling in his discourse the threats and promises of the Gospel, pours oil and wine into the wounds of sinners. There are some who sing only of His mercy, forgetting His judgment, and say, "Tush, the LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it." Others sing only of His judgment, despairing of mercy, and these "have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock," while there are some who, careless and at ease, keep silence, singing of neither, "dumb dogs, they cannot bark."

S. Bruno Carth.  
Hugo Card.  
S. Albertus Magnus.  
Ps. xciv. 7.  
Amos vi. 12.  
Isa. lvi. 10.

2 O let me have understanding : in the way of godliness.

These words are not read as a prayer, but as a promise and resolve, in the other versions. They are connected, by most of the Latin expositors, with the last word of the previous verse, thus : *I will play, and I will understand, &c.* That is, I will give full heed to the devotion in which I am engaged, my mind shall co-operate with my outward act, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also," and that in the way of sincerity, of contemplation, of obedience to God's commandments, ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace.

D. C.

1 Cor. xiv.  
Prov. iii. 17.

3 When wilt thou come unto me : I will walk in my house with a perfect heart.

The first literal meaning would seem to be David's longing to bring up the Ark of the Covenant out of the house of Obed-Edom into the newly acquired city of Jerusalem, but this is far from excluding the deeper reference to the personal advent of God to the soul, for we read His own promise, "In all places where I record My Name, I will come unto thee, and bless thee." Hence the Greek Fathers take the words as a prayer for the triple Advent of CHRIST; in the flesh, to each soul as its own SAVIOUR, and to judgment. Some, including S. Jerome, couple the words with the previous verse, reading it without the interrogation, and explaining it, *I will understand . . . when Thou shalt come to me*; but this is far less striking than the usual rendering, in which David pledges himself to keep the shrine of his house pure and guarded for the Guest he invites. *I will walk.* The word denotes the activity, promptness, and watchful care of a teacher who overlooks his scholars, as the Chaldee paraphrase seems to imply, and of the master of a great household, as one of the most learned of the Rabbins prefers, reminding us how Elisha, after stretching himself on the dead child, "walked in the house to and fro." *In my house.* The LXX. and Vulgate read, *in the midst of my house, A.V. within my*

Exod. xx.  
24.  
S. Basil. M.  
S. Chrysost.  
Theodoret.  
C.  
Targum.  
R. Kimchi.  
2 Kings iv.  
34.



- Eusebius. *house*. There are many who appear in public with studied gravity of attire and decorum of mien, yet cast aside restraint in the privacy of home, and show themselves in their true evil colours, but David here promises that no escape from the observation of men shall lead him to forget the presence of God. Some, therefore, take the *house* here to mean his heart, while others explain it of the Church, which is the dwelling of God's true servants. Yet another view is that this present
- C. life is intended, and Cassiodorus bids us mark the word *perambulabam*, which the Vulgate reads, I walked *through*, as teaching us the merely transitory nature of this life, through which we need to walk *with a perfect heart*, or, as he reads, *in the innocency of my heart*; the innocency of a dove or of a lamb, types of the HOLY GHOST and of the LORD
- Hugo Card. JESUS. He walked in a perfect heart, in the absolute stainlessness of His whole life, in the midst of His house, the people of Israel, the land of Judah, the very Temple itself reared in His honour; and that, in His Passion, from scourging to mocking, from mocking to spitting, thence to blows, to the Cross, to the grave. And it befits all who, as His ministers, preside over any charge, be it kingdom, diocese, community, household, congregation, not to remain shut up in some one corner of that house, not to lie snoring lazily on a soft couch, nor to sit gorging at a luxurious table; but to walk in the midst of the house, seeing to all things affecting those under them, like true Episcopi, or overseers; set over CHRIST's flock, as keepers of their souls rather than of their bodies. And it is needful that they should walk, not stand
- Titelman. still in the midst of the house, for the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth round about, seeking what he may devour, and therefore a true shepherd must meet him at every point, that he may not force an entrance into the fold. It is not less important to bear the literal sense in mind, that of the duty of every ruler to exhibit his care and forethought first and
- 1 S. Pet. v. 8. principally in his own immediate family, "for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?"
- 1 Tim. iii. 5.

4 I will take no wicked thing in hand; I hate the sins of unfaithfulness: there shall no such cleave unto me.

- The first clause here should run, as in A. V., *I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes*; words which remind us of the duty of the custody of sight, by neglect of which one thing David fell from the holiness he had theretofore achieved.
- Bellarmino. This reference is not done away by the Vulgate reading *unjust thing*, because one scope of the pledge is the avoidance of all those acts of tyranny and lawlessness into which the possession of absolute power hurries monarchs, and of which the murder of Uriah was a palmary instance. *I hate the sins of*
- Agellius.



*unfaithfulness.* The LXX. and Vulgate, nearly agreeing with A. V., read, *I hate them that commit transgressions*, that is, who turn aside out of the straight road, and walk crookedly. The king therefore promises not only that he will not set any evil thing before his eyes as an object of desire or a pattern for imitation, but declares his aversion to all who do otherwise. Cardinal Hugo points out that the plural word here denotes various kinds of violation of law, and he distinguishes them as breakers of the natural, the Mosaic, the Gospel, and the civil code. From the special meaning of the Vulgate *prævaricationes* here, which strictly implies collusion in the law-courts, either by reason of false accusation, or by an advocate betraying his client to the opposite side; one commentator is inclined to see here indicated that part of David's reform which dealt with unjust judges, removing them from their posts, and subjecting them to heavy punishment. *There shall no such cleave unto me.* That is, the sins of crookedness and transgression, the substitution of craft and policy for upright dealing, shall make no part of my life. Hugo Card. Le Blanc.

5 A froward heart shall depart from me : I will not know a wicked person.

The King, after stating the rules which are to govern his own conduct, now proceeds to lay down those for his household. The LXX. and Vulgate, punctuating the verse differently, read thus : *There shall not cleave unto me a froward heart, the wicked that departeth from me, I know not.*

Theodoret's explanation of the passage is that the speaker declares that, by sheer holiness of life, he will make himself so distasteful to wicked men that they will not merely fail to attach themselves to him with any close intimacy, but will actually shun his society, and treat him as an utter stranger. But the words seem to require rather more, and to imply a direct banishment of such characters by the King. It is not unfittingly, therefore, that we find the first clause applied to the traitor Judas, and the latter to those false Christians who have departed from the ways of CHRIST, and of whom He declares, "Many will say in that day, LORD, LORD, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name have cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, all ye that work iniquity." Theodoret. Bellarmine. Hugo Card. C. S. Matt. vii. 23.

6 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour : him will I destroy.

7 Whoso hath also a proud look and high stomach : I will not suffer him.

He proceeds now to specify the classes of persons who shall L.



at once be removed from his court, the secret intriguer, and the overbearing noble. He had experienced the effects of slander in the massacre of the priests on the false charge of Doeg; he had known, at the Court of Achish, what it was to be scorned by haughty princes. He knew of slander too, that it is, of all sins, the most repugnant to Divine charity, for, as a Saint has forcibly said, "He who slanders, smites charity with his reviling tongue, and so far as in him lies, slays and quenches it entirely, and not only so, but also in all persons absent, to whom the flying word may chance to come through those who were present." And there are four ways of slandering: denying an unpublished good thing; disparaging it when made known; publishing a hidden wrong thing; and magnifying it when it comes abroad. We may add to the list, those who readily listen to such conversation, and those who always lean to the harsher interpretation of a doubtful matter. And of all these, one who was most like to CHRIST in his perfect charity, observes, in one of his rare moods of sternness, "The sin of slander is a foe to the fruit of loving-kindness and grace, and hateful to our most loving God, for the slanderer feeds on the blood of souls, which he murders with the sword of his tongue."

*A high stomach, that is, with A.V., a proud heart.* The literal Hebrew is a *wide heart*, and this is turned by the phrase *insatiable* by the Vulgate, following the LXX. ἀπληστωρ, implying one who is greedy of wealth, rank, and power. And, taking the words as spoken by CHRIST, we may understand the *slanderers* of the Jews, who ascribed His miracles to Satan, the inspiration of His Apostles to drunkenness; while the conceited Greeks and haughty Romans, and all Pagans despising the obscure Eastern sect, are fitly denoted by the *proud*. *I will not suffer him.* The LXX. and Vulgate, *I did not eat with him.*<sup>1</sup> And this refers primarily to the exclusion of such persons from the royal table, as not suffered to hold any rank in the court entitling them to that distinction. It also holds of being guest as well as host, according to the warning given to the prophet to refuse the invitation of Jeroboam; to the counsel of the Apostle as to the mode of dealing with a Christian of evil life, "with such an one no not to eat." Mystically, CHRIST does not eat with the wicked who draw near to His table, because they do not receive the grace and benefit of the Holy Sacrament, albeit physically communicating at that rich banquet of the King.

8 Mine eyes look upon such as are faithful in the land: that they may dwell with me.

9 Whoso leadeth a godly life: he shall be my servant.

<sup>1</sup> Reading *לֹא אָכַל עִימוֹ*, instead of *לֹא אָכַל עִימִי*.



The word *faithful* here, unqualified by any further expression, denotes, as usual in Holy Writ, fidelity to the Law of God, as the true basis of loyalty to an earthly code or sovereign. And as persons of this stamp are to be selected throughout the land, to the exclusion of all inferior qualifications for offices of the court; so the chief amongst them, the immediate minister of the King, shall be he who is not only faithful, but godly. The first verse is well illustrated by the conduct of Constantius Chlorus, when he was Cæsar in Britain, and the edict of Diocletian and Maximian against Christianity was published there. He assembled the Christian officers of his household, and reading the mandate, told them to choose between apostasy and resignation of their employment. Such as chose the former alternative were immediately dismissed with ignominy, as their sovereign declared he could never trust the fidelity of men who had proved themselves traitors to their God. Mystically, the *faithful in the land* are diversely taken as the Apostles, over whom God's providential care watched, as they proclaimed the Gospel throughout the world; or those who are loyal and unshaken while dwelling amongst persons of earthly and carnal minds; or again, those who are sedulous to guard the purity of their own bodies. *That they may dwell with Me.* And that here in hope and sanctity of conversation, but in our Country by perfect fruition in the mansions of the FATHER. The LXX., Syriac, Arabic, and Vulgate, however, read, *That they sit with Me*, at table, in council, in judgment, in participation of good things and of employments. We may find here the charity of CHRIST, in that He will not sit alone at His board, but saith, like holy Job, "If I have eaten my morsel myself alone . . . then let mine arm fall." 23. We see also in the word *with*, His humility, in that He does not set Himself above His guests, but mingles among them, as it is written, "If thou be made the master of a feast, lift not thyself up, but be among them as one of the rest." But the interpretation most followed is that which takes the words of CHRIST's promise to the Apostles, that they should sit, with Him, on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. The two verses may also be taken as the words of a conscientious Bishop, declaring that no considerations of favour or kindred should affect his ordinations, but solely orthodoxy of belief and purity of life on the part of the candidates. And this meaning is almost forced upon us by the LXX. here, using as it does the priestly word *θειουργῶν* at the end of the ninth verse.

Bellarmine.

Eusebius.  
Vit. Const.  
i. 16.

S. Chrysost.

Philip de la  
Greve.

Arnobius.

D. C.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.Job xxxi. 17,  
23.Ecclus.  
xxxii. 1.

S. Chrysost.

A.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.

10 There shall no deceitful person dwell in my house : he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.

The parallelism of this verse is obscured by the LXX. and



Vulgate, which put *he that doeth pride* in the first clause. S. Albertus Magnus. They take the *house*, as before, diversely, either as denoting office in the Church of God, personal favour and acceptance with CHRIST, or a place in the heavenly Jerusalem, for it is written, "without is whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Rev. xxii. 18. *Shall not tarry in My sight.* The Chaldee is yet stronger, Targum. *shall not have the power of appearing before Me.* The literal Hebrew is given by the margin of A.V., *shall not be established*, that is, shall have no firm footing, a meaning practically coinciding with the Prayer Book Version. There is an increase of stress in the second paragraph. The crafty and deceitful person, who quibbles, misleads, and equivocates, while avoiding all directly false statements, shall not be suffered to be a permanent inmate in the King's house; while he that telleth *lies* shall be altogether banished from the royal presence. The force of this whole clause is much weakened by the LXX. and Vulgate, reading, *He that speaketh unjust things hath not gone straight before Mine eyes.* Bellarmine. This is explained by most to mean, *hath not pleased Me*, but Agellius. Agellius will have it that it denotes the terror and consequent stumbling of the deceiver when meeting the indignant lighting of the King's glance of rebuke. Even Pagans could rise to this zeal for truth:

Hom. II. *ἐχθρὸς γὰρ μοι κεῖνος ὁμῶς Ἀἰδᾶο πόλιν  
ὅς χ' ἔτερον μὲν κεῖθι ἐνὶ φρέσιν, ἕλλο δὲ βᾶζῃ.*

Hateful to me as gates of hell is he  
Who hides one thing within his mind, and speaks  
Another.

11 I shall soon destroy all the ungodly that are in the land: that I may root out all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

S. Basil. M. In the literal sense, S. Basil and Theodoret, who ascribe 2 Kings the Psalm to Josiah, remind us of his punishment of the idolatrous priests and purging of the Holy City; while those xxiii. 5. who allow David's authorship, remark that he failed, by his Lyranus. Ay. condoning the crimes of Joab, to keep the promise of speedy judgment on the guilty.

Targum. For soon, we should read with all the ancient versions, in the morning, the time of the sitting of courts of law in Eastern countries. The Chaldee explains this to be the world to come, bright as the morning, wherein Messiah will destroy His enemies, a meaning adopted by many Christian expositors, who take this passage of the morning of Resurrection and Judgment, marked by the condemnation of the wicked and their final exclusion from the heavenly Jerusalem.

C. A second view, taking the words not as spoken by CHRIST, but by any one of His servants, explains them of amendment



of sins in the light of God's Word, and the diligently rooting <sup>Origen.</sup> out of our hearts, His city, every evil passion and thought, D. C. every suggestion of our spiritual foes.

Wherefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, the God of mercy and judgment; glory be to the SON, Who taketh the faithful to dwell with Him; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who giveth understanding in the way of godliness.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

O God of measureless might, Who graciously bestowest <sup>Ludolph.</sup> mercy and judgment upon Thy servants; grant that we may faithfully love Thee, enter upon the right way, and depart from the vanity of hateful pride. (1.)

Singing unto Thee of Thy mercy and judgment, O LORD, <sup>Mozarabic.</sup> we pray and make music, beseeching that we may walk with understanding in the way of godliness, so that by the prompting of mercy we may keep in the straight path, and in fear of judgment may correct our errors. (1.)

We sing of mercy and judgment unto Thee, O LORD, our <sup>Mozarabic.</sup> SAVIOUR and Judge, help us with the one, warn us with the other; on that side is the light of pity, on this the rule of inquiry. Grant us Thy humble servants, O LORD, that a froward heart may not cleave to us, and that evil things before our eyes may not allure us, but that walking in the simplicity of innocence, Thou mayest lead us on in Thy pity and love, and absolve us as a truthful Judge. (11.)

Grant us, O LORD, through the interposition of Thy mercy, <sup>D. C.</sup> we beseech Thee, not to cling to a froward heart, but cause us to walk alway innocently in Thy courts, that pleasing Thee, Thou mayest vouchsafe to bring us to the fellowship of Thine everlasting glory. (1.)

#### PSALM CII.

**TITLE.** A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.

#### ARGUMENT.

**ARG. THOMAS.** That all the Gentiles reverence and fear the Name and glory of CHRIST. The Voice of CHRIST to the Church. The Voice of CHRIST to the Church when CHRIST ascended to the FATHER, or the voice of any one doing penance. The Voice of CHRIST in the Passion, and a prophecy of the new people. The Voice of CHRIST on the Cross.



**VEN. BEDE.** Although some have thought the present Psalm applicable to the LORD our SAVIOUR, it seems more suitable to suppose that the person of an afflicted and groaning *poor man*, as the title itself contains it, is introduced: for when he saith, *before the Lord*, he discloses the intention of the suppliant; whereby, dismissing the tumult of thoughts from his mind, he makes mention of nought save himself and Him to Whom he makes his prayer. And note, that while names are constantly set down in the titles, here a *poor man* without name is introduced as speaking: doubtless that whereas it is given to one, all CHRIST's *poor* may know that it is assigned to them.

This *poor man*, needy in goods, but rich in virtue, in the beginning of the Psalm beseeches the LORD in many ways to give heed to his prayer; because, broken down with constant affliction, he has his bones as it were burnt up. *Hear my prayer, O Lord, &c.* Then follows a mournful account of his necessities, *I am smitten down like grass, &c.* And lest he should appear, after so many sufferings, ungrateful for his chastisement, he proceeds in the third part to the praises of the LORD, by Whose Advent he saith that the Church will be built up; and whereas all things are to be changed, He, nevertheless, will abide for evermore. *Thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever.* There is introduced also a very prayerful ending, that the seed of the Saints may be directed to that place where the LORD dwells in everlasting glory. Thus the prayer of the poor man, which began with tears, is achieved in joy. *The children of Thy servants shall continue.*

**EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA.** A lamentation over the former people, and a prophecy of the new people, and the calling of the Gentiles.

**S. ATHANASIUS.** A Psalm in prayer.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* Saturday: Matins.

*Ambrosian.* Friday of Second Week: I. Nocturn.

*Parisian.* Friday: Sext.

*Lyons.* Friday: Matins.

*Quignon.* Saturday: Nones.

*Eastern Church.* Late Evensong.

#### ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian, &c.* Let my crying \* come unto Thee, O LORD.

*Parisian.* My drink \* have I mingled with weeping, from the face of Thine indignation and wrath.

*Mozarabic.* First portion: In whatever day I call upon Thee, hear me right soon, O LORD my GOD. Second portion: The heathen shall fear Thy Name, O LORD, and all the kings of the earth Thy majesty.

This, the fifth of the Penitential Psalms, against avarice, was formerly recited daily in Lent at Nones after the *Miserere*, a custom retained in the last Sarum Breviary, but now disused in the Roman Office. In its first origin, it seems to have been composed towards the end of the Captivity, perhaps after the decree for the rebuild-



ing of the Temple, but certainly before the restoration of the gates and walls of Jerusalem by Nehemiah. The private and personal character of the Psalm is marked by its title, which stands alone amongst the inscriptions of the Psalter, inasmuch as all the other examples are either musical or historical.

1 Hear my prayer, O LORD : and let my crying come unto thee.

The Church makes constant use of this verse, as a preparation to other petitions, for she hath learnt from the Prophet, that we must ask a hearing from GOD, before our special petitions are set forth ; not that GOD needs to be roused to hear, as though He were intent on other matters, but because we need that GOD give us the spirit of prayer ; nay, that His own SPIRIT may make supplication for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. *Hear my prayer*, make me so to pray that I may be worthy to be heard ; and *let my crying come unto Thee*, that my prayer may be such an eager and fervid cry of the heart, that it faint not on the way, but although sent up from the deep may reach Thee, sitting on the throne most high. That a prayer may be able to effect this, it should have certain properties :

Bellarmine.

Commoda, pura, volans, devota, tenax, pia, justa,  
Communis, brevis, in CHRISTO, cum spe, locus, ardor.

Useful, pure, winged, devout, persistent, loving, just,  
Common, brief, in CHRIST's Name, with hope, place, zeal.

That is, it should be for some salutary object, free from all evil thoughts, uplifted by alms and fasting, humble, constant, with true affection for GOD, uttered for a righteous purpose, in the person of the Church, so as to be profitable for all, not made up of vain repetition, in faith and through the merits and mediation of CHRIST, if possible in a house of prayer, and with fervency of purpose.

*My prayer*, the Psalmist calls it, showing that it is not enough for us to have the intercession of others on our behalf, but we need to have a petition of our very own to prove our earnestness to GOD. He says *prayer*, moreover, in the singular, implying that it is one special petition. And if we take the *poor man* of the title, as so many do, of Him Who though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, we may then explain this prayer of His to be that Our FATHER which He taught His disciples, or His supplication for the redemption of mankind. If the *poor man* be a type of the whole Jewish nation in Babylonian captivity, then we may see in the literal sense an intreaty for the deliverance of Israel, which we may spiritually apply to our ransom from the captivity of sin. The manner in which this mournful cry follows on the jubilant tone of those Psalms immediately preceding it is an apt type

Hugo Card.

A.

Hugo Card.

S. Basil. M.

Theodoret.

Z.

Agellius.

Titelman.



Hugo Card. of the manner in which joy and sorrow are blended in man's earthly life. It may be uttered fitly by any who are poor in spirit, and yearn for the riches of the Heavenly Country, or by any penitent soul which thinks with awe on the strictness of the Judgment to come; remembering that there are cries, like that of Sodom, which come up to God, and bring down brimstone and fire from Him out of heaven; so that it behoves every one who makes his prayer to God to beware that wrath, reviling, cursing, falsehood, and the like evil things mingle not with his cry, lest the answer should be a chastisement.

2 Hide not thy face from me in the time of my trouble : incline thine ear unto me when I call ; O hear me, and that right soon.

Ensebius. God is said to hide His face when men ask for things which it is not good that He should grant, and therefore this petition is for a right spirit in prayer, that He may cease to turn away, and may show us His countenance in loving bestowal of that we ask. If the words are put into the mouth of CHRIST, it is only as pleading for His members that we can suppose Him to speak of the FATHER's face being hidden from Him, but our low estate and sinfulness enable Him Who has identified Himself with us to speak in this wise. And therefore it is that He adds, *In what day soever I am in trouble*, for He saith to any one of His suffering members, "Thou art in trouble to-day, I am in trouble too; another is troubled to-morrow, I am in trouble; after this generation others who succeed are in trouble, I am in trouble unto the end of the world, for whosoever are troubled in My body, I am in trouble." But we may take it especially of the day of His bitter Passion, when the FATHER did incline His ear to Him when He called, and that *right soon*, by raising Him up on the third day; nay, in strictness, when but half the full space of that time had elapsed. Some will have it that there is a mystical stress on the word *day* here, connoting light and clearness; and others that it implies calling on God in purity of heart and clearness of understanding; or again, that it is a reference to the greater ease and efficacy of prayer under the rays of the Gospel than under the shadows of the Law. Hear me *right soon*, lest if Thou delay, there be none left for Thee to heal when Thou comest. And God's reply is precise: "Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am."

3 For my days are consumed away like smoke : and my bones are burnt up as it were a fire-brand.



This is the reason why God is asked to hear *right soon*, Bellarmino. lest there should be an end before His arrival to save. Some Lyranus. commentators, interpreting the Psalm as one of the Mac- Ay. cabee period, expound this passage with reference to the nearly successful attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to root out the Hebrew polity and worship. It may be more accurately referred to the gradual absorption of the exiled Jews into the heathen population amongst whom they dwelt, and the diminution of the faithful remnant. And this view is for- Agellius. cibly confirmed by the language of the prophet Zechariah touching the high priest Joshua, one of the exiles who did return, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning?" Zech. iii. 2. If, as before, we ascribe the words to our LORD, they will be Hugo Card. His expression of grief that His life and death have been in vain, so far as very many of His nominal followers are concerned, those teachers and priests who ought to be as *days*, giving light to the Church; those Religious, who ought to have been her strength and bones; the one darkened and defiled with the *smoke* of pride and vanity, the others *burnt up* by indevotion and greed; terms of reproach which every sinner who uses this Psalm in prayer on his own behalf, and is conscious that he has blackened his days with his evil living, may well apply to himself. A.

4 My heart is smitten down, and withered like grass : so that I forget to eat my bread.

This withering is from excess of heat, which may be either that of undue worldly prosperity or of crushing affliction, each destructive to a weak and sapless mind. He who has Bellarmino. basked too long in the sun of riches and luxury, whose heart has dried up with the cares of the world, may truly say, *I forget to eat my bread*, that bread of heavenly wisdom, which man calls *mine*, because it is not, like bodily food, common to him and the beasts; but which he ceases to relish, nay, begins to loathe as light and unsatisfying, when he is not sheltered under the overshadowing wings of God, and watered with the continual rain of divine grace. The Chaldee para- Targum. phrase coincides in part with this explanation, reading (as all the old versions rightly do) *because* instead of *so that*. My heart is withered, *because I have been forgetful of the teaching of the Law*. And this interpretation squares precisely with those two sayings of the LORD, "Man shall not live by bread Dent. viii. 3. alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth S. Matt. iv. of God;" and again, "My meat is to do the will of Him S. John iv. that sent Me, and to finish His work." Arnobius and some 34. Arnobius. others interpret the verse literally of a physical fast, but Cassiodorus justly objects that a complaint on the score of lack of bodily food is unworthy of the spiritual self-denial of the Psalmist, and that we should see here a confession of the suffering caused by the want of the Bread of Life, the C.



- L. royal banquet of the Eucharist, whether our own neglect or some cause external to us have occasioned our cessation of communion ; an acknowledgment of the dryness and indevotion which comes of infrequent partaking of the Sacrament, so unlike the daily Eucharists of the Early Church.

5 For the voice of my groaning : my bones will scarce cleave to my flesh.

- The latter clause ought to run as in A.V., *My bones cleave to my flesh* (marg.) or *skin*. Some commentators see in these words the severity of the penance and mortification wherewith the returning sinner bewails the time of his forgetfulness and neglect of the Divine food of the Word ; but most of the mediæval expositors prefer to follow the mystical gloss of S. Gregory ; that the *voice of my groaning* means the suggestions of the Evil One, who has caused all the grief and sighs of mankind, and that by reason of listening to that voice, Adam, the *bones* or strength of the human race, yielded to Eve, the *flesh*, or weaker vessel, and sinned ; an event repeated every time that reason yields to fleshly emotion.
- Bellarmino. Pseudo-Hieron.
- S. Greg. Mag.
- A. There is a milder interpretation, which takes the *voice of groaning* to be the compassion of the righteous for the lapsed, which results in the *bones*, the vigorous Saints, attaching themselves firmly to the weaker brethren, denoted by the *flesh*, that they may aid and sustain them. There is a further exposition, taking this, as well as the previous and following verses, of the physical sufferings of our Lord in the Passion, though this partial literalism is here abandoned by one commentator, who singularly expounds the verse of S. John, the firmest of the Apostles in his steadfastness, standing close to her whose flesh the SAVIOUR took, while He was uttering His dying groan upon the Cross.
- Hugo Card.

6 I am become like a pelican in the wilderness : and like an owl that is in the desert.

7 I have watched, and am even as it were a sparrow : that sitteth alone upon the house-top.

- Bellarmino. There are three kinds and degrees of penitential retirement set before us under the types of the three birds mentioned here, the *pelican*, seeking solitary places, being an apt emblem of the hermits of the Thebaid and other like solitaries ; the *owl*, dwelling in ruins once occupied by men, denoting the Common Life in the cells of the cloister, bare of the comforts and luxuries of secular life ; while the *sparrow* on the *house-top* signifies those living of necessity in the world, but withdrawing at times for secret prayer and contemplation, above the level of temporal concerns ; *watching* anxiously over the spiritual interests of those with whom they have to do.



Amongst the strange legends once current of the pelican, there are two which stand out conspicuously here in the notes of the mediæval commentators. One is that familiar idea of the "pelican in her piety," feeding her young with blood from her own breast (a tale due to the bird's red-tipped beak, and its custom of pressing this beak against the breast in order to disgorge the fish stored in the pouch under its lower mandible); the other, yet wilder, declaring that the mother-bird itself kills its young (or, as others tell us, finds them killed by serpents,) and after mourning over them three days, sprinkles them with blood from a wound it makes in its own side, and brings them to life again. These two stories are applied to CHRIST, feeding His children with His Blood, and reviving them, either after they have been slain by the old serpent, or after He has Himself killed sin in them. There is much else of a similar kind, but these are enough as examples.

L.

A.

S. Epiphanius.

S. Hieron.

*An owl that is in the desert.* For *owl*, which is most probably the correct reading here, the LXX. and Vulgate have *nyctiscorax*, the night-raven, whence Bellarmine, comparing this bird, as mentioned above, to Religious of the Common Life, explains the word as denoting the vigils and midnight offices of the cloister; which is not dissimilar to the earlier view, which sees in the word a reference to the secret good works and prayers of a penitent soul. The word *desert* ought to be *ruins*, and thus denotes the sorrow of the repentant sinner for the wasted years and slighted opportunities of his past life; while those who take the word here as a type of CHRIST remind us how the Jews slew Him in the night of their ignorance and unbelief, amidst the ruin and fall of their nation, partly standing in its observance of the Law and possession of the Prophets, but fallen as regards true and inward faith.

C.

Haymo.

Hugo Card.

S. Greg. M.

*I have watched*, in prayers and fastings and vigils, against all the snares of the enemy, and that as a *sparrow* on the *house-top*, uplifted in faith upon the Church as a secure watch-tower, sitting *alone*, because separated from worldly companionship. Of CHRIST they take this *watching* to be His awaking at the Resurrection, His *sitting on the house-top*, to mean His Ascension into heaven, where He, alone of all mankind, sitteth in the highest; whereas, but a little before, He was lying, as a bird of night, in the darkness of the grave, amidst the ruins of those gates of hell which He smote down.

D. C.

C.

S. Greg. M.

There are yet more allegories drawn from these two verses. S. Augustine will have it that three classes of preachers are designated by the three birds: the pelican of the wilderness standing for the missionary to those who have never heard the Gospel; the owl of the ruins, the seeker of lapsed Christians; the sparrow of the house-top to believers who have become tepid and fleshly, and who need therefore to be called

A.



Honorius.

to higher things by a voice from a loftier grade of spirituality than theirs. Another prefers to see the hearers rather than the preachers in these types, and distinguishes them as Gentiles, dwelling in the wilderness, Jews, abiding amidst the ruins of their Law and nation, Christians, rising from secular habits to religious contemplation.

8 Mine enemies revile me all the day long : and they that are mad upon me are sworn together against me.

A.  
S. Greg. M.A.  
C.

Bellarmine.

Wisd. ii. 12.

Z.

S. Athanasius.  
Cf. Isa. lrv.  
15, Jer. xxix.  
22.S. Basil. M.  
Theodoret.

They take the words in the first place of the LORD JESUS, both as to the revilings and slander which He endured before His Passion, and also the mocking and insults as He hung upon the Cross. The LXX. and Vulgate, instead of *They that are mad upon me* read *They that praised me*. And this is variously explained as feigned and hypocritical, or else as ironical, praise by some; while others suppose that a revulsion of feeling is indicated, so that those who were friends have been turned into enemies, and are now *sworn together* in conspiracy against the life of their former associate, owing to their anger for his having adopted a stricter life than theirs; so that they exclaim, "Therefore let us lie in wait for the righteous, because he is not for our turn, and he is clean contrary to our ways." And Euthymius mentions a further meaning, as given by some expositors, that we have here a prophecy of S. Peter's denial of his Master, confirmed with cursing and swearing. But in truth the latter clause is not given accurately by LXX., Vulgate, or the two English versions. It ought to stand, as in Symmachus and S. Jerome, *They swore by me*, or *They made me their oath*. That is, when imprecating curses on themselves or others, they took me, because of my misfortunes, as an example of misery. And in the literal sense of the passage, as referring to the sufferings of the Jews, either in the Captivity or under the persecution of Antiochus, according as the Psalm is dated, it expresses very forcibly the contempt of the nations around for the oppressed and diminished remnant of Israel.

9 For I have eaten ashes as it were bread : and mingled my drink with weeping ;

10 And that because of thine indignation and wrath : for thou hast taken me up, and cast me down.

Here is the special cause of the reviling mentioned just before. The commentators are at no small pains to discuss the literal meaning of the words, in order to give some plausible account of the eating of ashes. Thus a Jewish expo-



sitor tells us that the Israelites in the Captivity were forced, by reason of their poverty, to eat bread roughly baked on the coals, without any proper oven, and that in consequence of this hasty preparation, it was mixed with cinders and pebbles. Others, looking to the penitential custom of lying in sackcloth and ashes, assume that food was taken in this attitude, so that it became sprinkled with the ashes from the hands and face of the penitent. A third view treats the act as a deliberate act of mortification, such as has been recorded of more than one Christian Saint, as S. Godric of Finchale, or S. Francis of Assisi, the latter of whom is said to have sprinkled ashes on any dainty food served him at great tables, saying with a smile, "Brother Ash is pure." In the mystical sense, they take the words of that Master whom Francis served and imitated, in His tenderness and companionship with publicans and sinners, black with their guilt, and yet repentant, because the fires of evil passions were burnt out in them: while He mingled His drink with weeping, when at the banquet in the house of Simon the Pharisee, He permitted the sinful woman to wash His feet with her tears. And S. Augustine points out that the doctrine of penance and restoration of sinners was precisely the one heaviest charge which Pagans in his day brought against the Christian Church, as they alleged that the inevitable result of such treatment would be the multiplication of crimes in the confidence of future impunity. The Carmelite, answering this objection, reminds us very happily that the strongest lye for cleansing purposes is made with water poured through ashes, and that penitence does not merely hide, but removes sin. The notion of eating and drinking in this connection is, as they explain it, the incorporation of penitents into the Body of CHRIST or of the Church. Thus a Saint observes: "My penitence is His food, and my salvation is His food, I am myself His food: for does He not eat ashes as it were bread? For I, because I am a sinner, am ashes, that I may be eaten by Him; I am cleansed when I am rebuked, I am swallowed when instructed, I am digested when undergoing change, I am assimilated when I am shaped anew."

We too eat ashes for bread when we swallow down our sins, now burnt out, so that they pass forth from us into the draught, we mingle our drink with weeping, when we approach the chalice of the Holy Eucharist with true penitence, or when our longing for the Heavenly Land causes us to burst into yearning tears.

For thee, O dear, dear country,  
Mine eyes their vigils keep,  
For very love, beholding  
Thy happy name, they weep.

Bern. Clun.  
Rhythm.

And that because of Thine indignation and wrath. Here  
III.

L.

Genebrardus.  
Titelman.

Reginald.  
Dunelmens.  
S. Bonaventura, Vit. S.  
Francisci, cap. 5.

S. Greg. M.  
C.  
Hugo Card.

A.

Ay.

S. Bernard.  
Serm. in  
Cant. 7.

Gerson.  
Innocent  
III.



is the cause why CHRIST and the Church, His Bride, take sinners to themselves, that they may be sheltered *from the face* (LXX. and Vulg.) of Divine anger against evil; and it is likewise the cause why penitents humble themselves before the LORD their God, Who, that they might be saved, *hath taken up His Only-Begotten on the Cross, and cast Him down into the grave.* And as an eagle snatches turtles and shell-fish high into the air, and then dashes them down upon a rock to break their hard covering that he may eat, so CHRIST lifts the sinner up in prosperity, wealth, and security, that by a sudden fall the hard shell of worldliness and evil habit may be pierced, and the softer nature within be incorporated into His own Body. Happy is such a casting-down, as it is written in another place, "It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn Thy statutes." And while we may take the verse of man's fall from that innocence and dignity up to which GOD took him out of the dust, we may yet remember that a better Eden, a nobler dominion is promised to the sons of Adam when repentant than Adam enjoyed before his sin.

C.

Ps. cxix. 71.  
Vulg.

A.

11 My days are gone like a shadow : and I am withered like grass.

Bellarmine.

Our very mortality is a token of the casting-down which sin has brought upon us. As a vase, flung from a height, does not merely lose its place of dignity, but is shattered to fragments by its fall, so man did not merely lose his high position by Adam's transgression, but was plunged into the ruin of the first death, and the peril of the second. And in comparing the *days* of man to a *shadow*, we have not only the idea of unsubstantiality and fleetingness put before us, but that of darkness. If our days are like a shadow, what are our nights? If our clearest understanding, our holiest and warmest efforts after good are this, what are our errors and our sins? "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness?" And consequently S. Bernard bids us note that it is not here said, My days have set *like the sun*, for the sun, soon as his course is over, leaves tangible results behind him in the life and warmth he has bestowed, but a shadow in no way affects the objects over which it passes; and in like manner, the life of a sinner is of no profit to mankind. *I am withered like grass.* For grass, when it has been cut down, is carried away in wagons, is given as food to cattle, is made into beds for men to lie on; and so we, when death comes with his scythe, are borne on a bier, given as food to worms, trodden under foot as wayfarers pass over our graves. And the suitability of the verse to the enfeebled and fading condition of age or sickness, points the use of the Psalm in the Greek office for the dying.

Honorius.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.S. Matt. vi.  
23.  
S. Bernard.  
Serm. in  
Cant. 20.Philip de la  
Grève,  
Serm. 213.Agellius.  
Euchol.  
Græc.



12 But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever : and thy remembrance throughout all generations.

We have here not merely a confession of the distance between God and the sinner, an appeal to His mercy, in that He is so much the mightier, not to bear too hardly on His feeble creature, saying, "Wilt Thou break a leaf driven to and fro; and wilt Thou pursue the dry stubble?" but also a declaration of confidence in Him Who, being eternal, has the time and power to help always in His hands. It is thus a cry for the Messiah to come for the deliverance and restoration of His people, and His *remembrance* may thus mean the promise of His Incarnation, preserved from generation to generation in type and prophecy, and destined to everlasting continuance; or His own covenant with mankind to bestow eternal life upon them; or again, that *Memorial* which He has given His Church in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, wherewith He is with us from generation to generation, "alway unto the end of the world." Another, reminding us that the phrase *remembrance* or *memorial* is technically applied to any brief document containing an abstract of pleadings, to assist the recollection of an advocate, tells us that the memorial of CHRIST, which endures from generation to generation, is the terse petition He has taught us as the sum of all prayer: "Our FATHER, which art in heaven," &c., which is also, as it were, the title-deed of our inheritance above.

L.

Job xiii. 25.  
Theodoret.

Bellarmine.

C.

Innocent  
III.Hugo Card.  
S. Matt.  
xxviii. 20.  
S. Bernard.  
Serm. in  
Nativ.  
B.V.M. 1.

13 Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Sion : for it is time that thou have mercy upon her, yea, the time is come.

Here, in the literal sense, is the declaration of the close of the seventy years' Captivity, and a prayer to God to fulfil the words of His prophets, by delivering Israel out of Babylon. And then, taking it of CHRIST, and of His mercy shown to His Church, they explain the word *arise* in three ways, as denoting His Incarnation, whereby He did as it were stand up from His throne and repose of Godhead, to enter the battle for man; His Resurrection, when He had mercy on the small and panic-stricken remnant in the upper chamber in Jerusalem; and His second Coming, when His earthly Sion shall see all evil crushed for ever, and the breaches of the heavenly Sion shall be repaired by filling up with ransomed men the ranks thinned by the fall of the rebel angels. *The time is come.* The first advent of CHRIST was in that fulness of time when God sent forth His Son; and His Advent to every faithful soul which He has tried sufficiently by tribulation before He comes to give it peace and comfort, is also in "the accepted time, the day of salvation."

Theodoret.  
L.S. Chrysost.  
Ay.

Z.

C.  
Gal. iv. 4.  
Hugo Card.2 Cor. vi. 2.  
D. C.



14 And why? thy servants think upon her stones :  
and it pitieth them to see her in the dust.

- L. The Rabbinical explanation of this verse is that the *servants* of God here mentioned are the sovereigns who granted permission for the rebuilding of Jerusalem ; to wit, Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes. But it seems far better to understand it of Ezra, Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, with other zealous Jews, preferring the very ruins of their own dear city to the stately palaces and vast gardens of Babylon. And this sense is brought out more clearly by the true rendering of the first clause, as given by A.V., LXX., and Vulgate : *Thy servants take pleasure in her stones*. Mystically, the words are taken of the Apostles, delighting in choosing out and hewing fitly choice and living stones for building up the Church of God, in whom they can take *pleasure*, while their *pity* is reserved for the *dust*, the mere ruins from the fallen walls, the down-trodden Jews who crucified their Lord. The Saints take pleasure too in the hardships they suffer in the Church Militant, and thus in one of the Antiphons at Lauds on the feast of the Protomartyr S. Stephen, the Church says, " The stones of the torrent were sweet unto him, all righteous souls follow him." Note too, that the servants of God delight in the thought of those foundations of sapphire, those walls of costly jewels, wherewith the Heavenly Jerusalem is built up ; while they feel grief and pity for the low estate of the earthly Church, contrasting its suffering condition with the glories of the City which is free, the mother of us all ; and pity too the misery of those who are content to be mere dust and earth here, in grovelling desires, rather than be as " the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon the land," built high in the crystalline battlements of the royal Sion.
- Genebrardus.  
Agellius.  
S. Chrysost.  
Haymo.  
A.  
S. Prosper.  
S. Albertus Magnus.  
Brev. Romanum.  
Isa. liv. 11.  
Rev. xxi. 19.  
Gerson.  
The Gloss.  
Zech. ix. 16.

15 The heathen shall fear thy Name, O LORD :  
and all the kings of the earth thy majesty ;

16 When the LORD shall build up Sion : and  
when his glory shall appear ;

- Bellarmino.  
Agellius.  
2 Macc. iii.  
2.  
C.  
Hugo Card.  
A.
- The non-fulfilment of this prophecy at the restoration of the Jews and the erection of the second Temple, albeit certain offerings were no doubt made to the God of the Hebrews by various Gentile monarchs, on the renovation of the Temple, and after its expiation under Judas Maccabeus, teaches us that we must look to a higher meaning than a literal one for the Psalm ; and we see in it first, the victory of the Church over the Empire, and the barbarous nations and kings who overthrew the Roman sway ; and then, the final revelation of the glory of CHRIST in Judgment. And a Saint reminds us that the LORD, when He was laying Himself as the foundation of Sion, was not seen in glory, but in humility and



sorrow, yet that His weakness has become our strength, so that He is seen now in glory in building up the Saints of His Church.

17 When he turneth him unto the prayer of the poor destitute : and despiseth not their desire.

These words are the completion of the two former verses, and imply that the building-up of Sion is in answer to lowly supplication. And they will thus have their first literal sense in the restoration of the Jewish polity on the full repentance of the captive people; while their deeper import will be found in the Incarnation, as God's reply to the orisons of the Prophets, and in His coming to judgment, invoked by the cry of the Martyrs under the altar, "How long, O LORD, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

Theodoret.

Bellarmine.

Rev. vi. 10.

18 This shall be written for those that come after : and the people which shall be born shall praise the LORD.

The literal sense of the verse appears to be a direction for committing this prophecy to writing, in order that when it had been fulfilled by the restoration of Israel to Palestine, and the revival of the national polity almost by a new creation, (for the A.V. correctly reads here, with LXX. and Vulgate, *created* instead of *born*,) the memory of it might not be lost, but thanksgivings be offered to God in divine worship because of His wonderful truth and goodness. But a fuller sense is suggested by the words of the Apostle, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." For we are that *other generation* (LXX. and Vulg.) which was to come, the people which have been created anew by the laver of regeneration, gathered out of heathenism to praise the LORD; and taught the full mysteries of the New Testament by means of that Old Testament which bade the former generation look in hope for that which we hold in fruition. "Therefore, if any man be in CHRIST, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." And it is only for those who are willing to become a new generation, unlike the children of this world, a fresh creation, of grace, not of nature, that the Gospels are written, that the law of the Most High is written, not on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of our hearts. There is no name of the writer given, because only One can so write on our hearts, the HOLY SPIRIT Himself.

L.

Rom. xv. 4.

A.

2 Cor. v. 17.

Hugo Card.

19 For he hath looked down from his sanctuary : out of the heaven did the LORD behold the earth ;



20 That he might hear the mournings of such as are in captivity : and deliver the children appointed unto death.

- S. Greg. M. The A.V. reads correctly with LXX. and Vulgate, *the*  
C. *height of His sanctuary*. And the general voice of the early  
Haymo. expositors bids us see here a prophecy of CHRIST stooping from the exalted throne of His divine Majesty, to take upon Him the clay of our human nature; beholding with His especial grace and favour that lowly and beauteous valley, the Blessed Mary, wherein He willed to abide. A certain ambiguity in the Vulgate, *de excelso sancto suo*, which may refer to a person as well as a place, has led to some variety of exposition here amongst the Latins; of whom some refer the verse to the FATHER, looking lovingly on mankind from the Person of His "high and holy One," the Eternal Son; while others take the phrase tropologically of any saintly Prelate, through whom GOD vouchsafes to instruct and guide His people.
- S. Bruno  
Carth.
- Innocent  
III.
- Hugo Card.

*That He might hear the mournings of such as are in captivity.* And so He spake to Moses at the burning bush, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land into a good land and large." Again, He delivered them in like manner out of Babylon, and came Himself in person a third time to save them from the sorer bondage of sin, to bring them into a yet better country. *Those in captivity* to sin He hears, that He may let them go. These fetters of sin are manifold, and may be summed up thus :

- Hugo Card. Ignoro, nequeo, corrumpor, negligo, lassor,  
Hoste premor, consuetus agor, timeo, socius sum.
- I know not, cannot, am tainted, idle, faint,  
Forced by a foe, driven by custom, fear, am a mate.

That is, we are liable to sins of ignorance, of weakness, of the corrupt flesh, of omission, of weariness in well-doing, by actual compulsion from without, by the force of habit, through fear, and because of evil companionship. From all these the LORD came to set us free. But He especially delights in hearkening to the petitions of those voluntary prisoners who have heeded the counsel of the Wise Man, preaching of Wisdom, "Put thy feet into her fetters, and thy neck unto her chain; bow down thy shoulder, and be not grieved with her bonds . . . then shall her fetters be a strong defence for thee, and her chains a robe of glory." And thus the words will fitly apply to those who have taken upon them the obligations of the Religious Life, and pass their time in making intercessions for others. There is a further meaning to be

Gerson.

Ecclus. vi.  
24, 29.

Cd.

Hugo Card.



drawn from the verse, namely, the deliverance of the souls of the Patriarchs from Hades and their introduction to Paradise when CHRIST harrowed hell.

The prey which Hell had gorged of old  
Is torn for ever from its hold,  
And hosts from prison chains set free  
With JESUS leave captivity.

S. Fulbert,  
The Hymn,  
Chorus No-  
vus Hierusa-  
lem.

*The children appointed unto death.* The literal Hebrew is *the children of death*. And this metaphor may be taken either as above, or as meaning the children of slain parents. The former is the more exact, and thus indicates simply the imminence of the peril out of which God delivered His people, mystically or literally. But the majority of the expositors prefer the latter, and explain the words of Christians now, either as spiritual descendants of those Jews who died in their sins as having rejected the Messiah, or of Adam and Eve, who brought death into the world; while another interpretation prefers to see us described as the descendants of the Apostles and Martyrs who died for the Faith, and left their examples to us for imitation. This second meaning can defend itself by the literal history of the two great deliverances of Israel, seeing that it was the children of those that came out of Egypt, and not the first members of the Exodus themselves, who entered Canaan, inasmuch as all the six hundred thousand save two died in the wilderness; and similarly that but a very few scanty relics of the generation which had known the first Temple attained with the younger one to see the new one raised. There is a further distinction, that the Jews, possessed of life, though tied down by their traditions and blindness, are those *in captivity*, while the *children of death* signify the Gentile heathen, cut off from all knowledge of immortality in CHRIST, and bound in the chains of the devil.

Z.  
Honorius.  
Innocent  
III.

Gerson.

Honorius.

21 That they may declare the Name of the LORD  
in Sion : and his worship at Jerusalem ;

22 When the people are gathered together : and  
the kingdoms also, to serve the LORD.

Here, upon earth, in *Sion*, the Church Militant, our task is to preach CHRIST, to declare the Name of the Lord, till we make the people of the earth His disciples, till " the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD and of His CHRIST," and that *gathered together*, in one faith, one baptism, one body; while the heavenly *Jerusalem* will be the place for the everlasting *worship* or *praise* of the LORD, when the fulness of the Gentiles has come in, and those crowned kings who have subdued the earth of their own bodies, the hosts of

Ay.

Rev. xi. 15.

S. Bruno  
Carth.



their own passions, cast their diadems in love and awe before the throne of the Son of God.

Sir E.  
Denny.

Come, O ye kings, ye nations,  
With songs of gladness hail Him,  
Ye Gentiles all before Him fall,  
The royal Priest in Salem.  
O'er hell and death triumphant  
Your conquering LORD hath risen,  
His praises sound Whose power hath bound  
Your ruthless foe in prison.

23 He brought down my strength in my journey :  
and shortened my days.

Aben Ezra.  
Targum.

This is, as the Rabbins allege, a cry of weakness from those Jews whose place of exile was very distant from Jerusalem, and who feared that the long and toilsome journey would exhaust their powers before they could reach the Holy City, and share in the glory and happiness of reviving it anew from its ruins. They differ as to the *He* of the verse, some taking it, as seems the natural order, to mean God, named but just before at the close of the previous verse, while others suppose that the Enemy is meant, cutting off the straggling bands of pilgrims on the way. But it seems better to take the verse in a more general sense, of the course of this life, wherein GOD suffers us to be afflicted and weakened, lest, loving the road too well, we should be insufficiently mindful of the Land to which we journey. But the LXX. and Vulgate, following a totally different reading of the Hebrew text, give a very dissimilar version here : *He (or, she) answered Him in the way of His might, Tell me the fewness of my days.*<sup>1</sup> And there is a great variety of expositions due to the obscurity of this rendering. Thus, S. Augustine will have it, that the question is addressed by Jerusalem, by the Church, to CHRIST, after His Resurrection in power, asking how long her earthly sojourn is to last, before the day of eternity comes on. Another takes it that the earth, which the LORD beholds, answers Him in the way of virtue, by becoming obedient to His precepts, and then prays of Him to teach her the shortness of human life, that she may be fitted with longing for immortality. A third view ascribes the words to the "poor man" of whom we hear in the title of the Psalm, who, seeing that God has begun to show mercy upon Sion, is fearful of dying before he has seen the salvation fully wrought out, and beseeches GOD to remove his alarm by granting him a longer space. Another explanation takes it thus : Jerusalem asked the LORD to tell her the fewness of her days, and He an-

De Mula.

Coccejus.  
Rosen-  
müller.

A.

Haymo.

Z.

L.

Agellius.

<sup>1</sup> Reading  $\text{הוֹדָה}$  for  $\text{הוֹדָה}$ ,  $\text{וְהוֹדָה}$  for  $\text{וְהוֹדָה}$ , and perhaps  $\text{וְהוֹדָה}$  instead of  $\text{וְהוֹדָה}$ .



swered her in the way of His might, as He was fast treading the road which led to His victorious Cross: "The days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side."

Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
S. Luke  
xix. 43.

24 But I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of mine age : as for thy years, they endure throughout all generations.

It is not a mere prayer for life for its own sake, but that the speaker may behold God's redemption of Israel. And therefore S. Augustine takes it as the prayer of the Church that God will prolong her earthly existence to the end of the world, that she may do His work amongst mankind. And spoken by the individual believer, the words denote his prayer that God will permit him to see the great work accomplished ; for, on the one hand, being Eternal, He has the empire over time ; and on the other, the brief prolongation of human life asked for brings man no nearer to the years of Him Who is before all time and to all ages. And it is, further, an intreaty that God may not cut short the days of amendment, but permit penitence to have its full course and perfect work. But the Vulgate rendering here, *Call me not back*, has led to a curious mystical exposition. I am running a race, the Psalmist would say, on the way of salvation, call me not back from that race to the sins of my hot youth, when I had as yet measured only half the span of my days ; call me not back from my exile before I am ready, lest I should have but that half of my life which belongs to this world, which knows only half-days, because night claims a moiety of the hours as her own, and not attain to the fulness of those eternal days, which have no cloud nor evening, those years of the LORD which endure throughout all generations.

Genebrar-  
dus.

A.

Agellius.

Honorius.

Haymo.

S. Greg. M.

Innocent  
III.

25 Thou, LORD, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth : and the heavens are the work of thy hands.

26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure : they all shall wax old as doth a garment ;

27 And as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed : but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

These verses hold an important place in Scripture, for they are cited by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, obviously adopting a Messianic tradition of the Jews, as spoken of CHRIST, the Only-begotten SON, and not primarily of the

Heb. i. 10—  
12.



- S. Greg. M. **Eternal FATHER.** Mystically, they teach us that God laid the foundation of the Church in Him Who is the *Beginning* and the *End*, none other foundation than which can any man lay, and that He lays the foundation of spiritual life in us while we are yet in the very beginning of our existence, in that He suffers us to be brought to Him in baptism as infants. The *heavens*, the Apostles and Saints, raised high in contemplation, pouring down refreshing rains of doctrine upon the earth, are, in an especial manner, the *work of His hands*, because only His efficient grace makes them what they are.
- Hugo Card. **A.** *They shall perish*, in that they must undergo the common lot of men, for their earthly garment of flesh waxes old and faint, but He Who endures for ever *changes them as a vesture*, for "we shall be changed, for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." And this is certain, for *Thou art the same*, "JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," the same Who hast said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away," and Thou, the Faithful and True, hast promised eternal life in the new heaven and new earth to them that are loyal to Thee, *Whose years shall not fail*, and Whose kingdom is therefore everlasting, so that it follows :
- Honorius.
- S. Bruno Carth. Hugo Card. 1 Cor. xv. 59.
- Heb. xiii. s.
- S. Mark xiii. 31.

28 The children of thy servants shall continue :  
and their seed shall stand fast in thy sight.

- A.** S. Augustine, pointing out that these words seem to exclude the servants themselves, that is, the Apostles (whose spiritual children we are,) or any generation of Christians which takes the Psalm as its own ; argues that we must interpret them mystically of the good works done by the disciples of CHRIST, which are their fruits borne to Him, the Bridegroom of their souls. The servants, then, must dwell by means of their works, by means of their children. Be not barren, if thou desire to dwell, send thine offspring before thee whither thou art following. Let the children lead thee into the land of promise, the land of the living, not of the dying ; as Joseph went before his father Jacob into the land of Egypt, and said to him and to his brethren, "God did send me before you to preserve life." *And their seed shall stand fast in Thy sight.* That is, the future generations of Christians shall be confirmed in the faith, so that the Church will never be abolished nor die out till the end of the world, but will be *guided to eternity* (Vulg.) by the same HOLY SPIRIT which has hitherto been the Teacher of the faithful ; or, with the fuller spiritual meaning of the A. V., *shall be established before Thee*, strengthened in heaven against the possibility of fall, by gazing for ever on the countenance of CHRIST ; so that there is not only the glory of the changed vesture, the royal apparel of the renovated body, but the perfect vigour and felicity of the ransomed soul.
- Gen. xlv. 5.
- Honorius.



If the body, once made glorious,  
 Such high gifts and bright shall own,  
 What the beatification  
 Of the spirits round the throne,  
 When in perfect revelation  
 Shall the Bridegroom's Face be shown?

The Hymn,  
*Nec quis-*  
*quam oculus*  
*vidit.*

Wherefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, the Maker of heaven and earth;  
 glory be to the SON, Who shall build up Sion; glory be to  
 the HOLY GHOST, Who heareth the prayer of the poor des-  
 titute.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:  
 world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

Hearken, O LORD, graciously to the prayers of Thy humble servants, that we who, bound in our sins, have withered like grass, may be lifted up by the glance of Thy heavenly mercy. (1.) Ludolph.

Arise, O GOD, and have mercy upon Sion, for the time of Mozarabic. having mercy on us is come, look upon our lowly petition, and accept the prayer of Thy humble servants. (11.)

Hear our prayer, O LORD, and let our cry come unto Thee without any obstacle; in what day soever we call upon Thee, let our prayer be swiftly laid open before Thee, and turn not Thy face from our sight, nor withdraw Thy guidance from our conduct, that we, whose desires will then attain unto Thee, may rejoice in obtaining our request. (11.) Mozarabic.

O LORD, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto Thee, in the gentle ear of Thy loving-kindness; call us not back in the midst of our days, but grant that as we aim at a certain goal, we may finish our race of holiness, and through desire for sanctification may obtain, in the few days of this present life, the kingdom of eternal glory. (11.) Mozarabic.

Thine enemies reviled Thee unjustly all the day long, when they not only failed to know Thee the LORD of the world, but the men of peace swore against Thee. Grant us, therefore, that as we truly believe in Thy Passion, we may also live without end together with Thee in the everlasting Resurrection. (11.) Passiontide.

Hear our prayer, O LORD, as we cry unto Thee, and from the height of Thy sanctuary behold the earth, and graciously put away from us evils present and to come, that we may declare Thy glory in Sion, and Thy praise in the heavenly Jerusalem. (1.) D.C.



## PSALM CIII.

TITLE. Of David.

## ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, sitting in the heavens, extends His kingdom and dominion over all nations. The Voice of the Church to her people, that the creature should praise the Creator.

VEN. BEDE. After those most lowly prayers of the happy poor man, and the utterance of his sighs of penitence, the whole of this Psalm overflows with the praise of the LORD, and the gladness of laudation follows the previous tears, for to *David* always means CHRIST, to Whom praise is given.

Throughout the whole Psalm the Prophet is speaking. In the first part he enjoins his soul to bless the LORD and to remember His benefits. *Bless the Lord, O my soul.* In the second place, he tells what things He did for Moses and His other faithful ones, that He may be understood to have been ever bountiful from all ages. *He showed His ways unto Moses.* Thirdly, he directs his words to the Angels and heavenly powers, and summons the other rational creatures to busy themselves constantly in the praise of the LORD. *Bless the Lord, all ye angels of His.*

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, concerning the coldness which mastered him in the time of his old age. Also an acknowledgment and thanksgiving offered by men of GOD.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. The doctrine of thanksgiving.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of counsel, and, as it were, of command.

## VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian.* Saturday: Matins. [Ascension: III. Nocturn. Michaelmas Day and Guardian Angels: III. Nocturn.]

*Monastic.* Saturday: Matins. [Ascension: II. Nocturn. Michaelmas Day and Guardian Angels: II. Nocturn.]

*Ambrosian.* Friday of Second Week: I. Nocturn.

*Parisian.* Wednesday: Sext.

*Lyons.* Saturday: Sext.

*Quignon.* Thursday: Lauds.

*Eastern Church.* Fifth Psalm of the Hexapsalmos at Matins: First Psalm of the Typica.

## ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* As preceding Psalm. [Ascension: The LORD in heaven, \* Alleluia, hath prepared His seat, Alleluia. Michaelmas: Many mighty things concerning Michael the Archangel, who, strong in battle, achieved victory. Guardian Angels: O praise the LORD, ye Angels of His, ye that excel in strength; ye that fulfil His commandment, and hearken unto the voice of His words.]

*Ambrosian.* As preceding Psalm.

*Parisian.* Whoso putteth his trust \* in the LORD, in the mercy of the most Highest, shall not be moved.

*Mosarabic.* The LORD is full of compassion and mercy, \* for He will not alway be chiding, nor will He keep His anger for ever.



1 Praise the LORD, O my soul : and all that is within me praise his holy Name.

The notes of confession and lamentation in the previous Psalm change into those of praise and thanksgiving found in this and the five succeeding ones ; whence the Greek Fathers suggest that this may very well be a Temple-Psalm of acknowledgment of the merciful restoration of Sion prayed for just before. And we may take it as the thanksgiving of the pardoned sinner, who has made his acknowledgment of guilt and has received absolution, breaking out thereupon into a song of thanksgiving, like Moses after the overthrow of the Egyptians. *Praise the Lord, O my soul.* There is no special occasion of thanksgiving mentioned, no particular time for it prescribed here, whence we may gather that every event of our life gives us sufficient reason, every moment of it a fitting opportunity, to praise the LORD. In the hymns of the Church during public worship, in the conduct of business, in taking food, in slumber itself, innocent and free from all evil thoughts and dreams which the memory of past sins may excite, praise the LORD, O my soul. *All that is within me*, my secret plans, my thoughts, desires, inclinations, whatever goes on within and appears not externally, for it is not enough to praise with the voice alone, unless all that is within praise too, unless desires, thoughts, and reason combine in one act of earnest thanksgiving to the *holy Name* of God as He is in heaven, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, the holy Name JESUS, by which He is revealed to us on earth.

S. Basil. M.  
Theodoret.

Hugo Card.

A.

Agellius.

Honorius.  
Hugo Card.

2 Praise the LORD, O my soul : and forget not all his benefits ;

He repeats his opening words, for the more effect of kindling the ardour of his soul, to show that the praise of God should never cease, and that both the active and passive faculties of the soul should join in praise. If thou *forget*, thou wilt be silent. Thou canst not have the LORD's benefits before thine eyes, unless thine own sins are there too, not pleasure in past sin, but condemnation of it, condemnation by thyself, remission from God. Several of the commentators, dwelling on the Vulgate word here for benefits, *retributions*, dwell on its meaning as teaching us how God repays us good for evil, how He has given us back, over and over again, all the gifts of grace which we lost by our first parents' fall ; how He bestows on us afresh, with large and accumulated interest, any benefit for which we have yielded Him hearty thanks, how all His bounties are double, first in withholding the punishment which is our due, and then in conferring the prize we could never win.

A.  
S. Prosper.  
Hugo Card.  
A.

Hugo Card.

D. C.

L.

Bellarmine.



3 Who forgiveth all thy sin : and healeth all thine infirmities;

4 Who saveth thy life from destruction : and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness;

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things : making thee young and lusty as an eagle.

P. The Psalmist counts up six benefits which we have received from CHRIST in redemption. First, that He has remitted our guilt, making satisfaction by His own death. Secondly, He hath healed our infirmities, by allaying the heat of our carnal passions, and by doing away in Baptism with the imputation of original sin. Thirdly, He has delivered us from the ruin and death of wickedness by the teaching of the Gospel. Fourthly, He bestows on us reward for the faithful observance of the Gospel precepts. Fifthly, He has purchased for us the kingdom of heaven and all its happiness, with His own Blood. Sixthly, He has obtained for us, by His own Resurrection, the immortality of the body, when our forms shall be renewed in youth and vigour, and soar upward to the celestial heights. *Who forgiveth all thy sin* : that is, both original and actual. *And healeth all thine infirmities* : that is, all the weakness and tendency towards sin engendered partly by original guilt, and partly by former evil habit and all outward occasions, such as ignorance, forgetfulness, and other frailties, which make it easy for us to err.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

A.  
L.

S. Fulgent.  
Ep. 7.  
Isa. liii. 4.

D. C. They take occasion to remind us, too, of the bodily cures wrought by the LORD JESUS during His earthly sojourn, and of His being still the one source of all healing wrought for us still by human agency. *Who saveth thy life*. The A. V.

A.

more exactly, with LXX. and Vulgate, *redeemeth thy life*, teaching us that we, who were sold under sin, have been bought back by the Blood of CHRIST, and that our *life*, the principle of grace, is not given over to *destruction*, that is, to the evil one, nor our soul to the second death. *Who crowneth thee*. And that either by encircling us for a defence, as though with armour or a ring of soldiery; or in the more usual acceptance, with the royal diadem of the kingdom, or the wreath of a victorious struggle here and in the world to come. Cardinal Hugo enumerates many crowns named in Holy Writ, first of which is the LORD JESUS Himself, of Whom is written, "In that day shall the LORD of Hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of His people." And He is thus Himself the chief reward and glory conferred upon His Saints. There

Hugo Card.  
S. Chrysost.  
Titelman.  
Arnobius.

Z.

Hugo Card.

Isa. xxviii. 5.

S. Bonaven-  
tura.



are, besides this chief and imperial diadem, various others; as the Church, of which the Prophet saith, "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." There is the Manhood of CHRIST, that "crown wherewith His Mother crowned Him in the day of His espousals" to the human race. There are the converts made by the preachers of righteousness, "for what is our life, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye?" There is everlasting blessedness, "Thou hast crowned him with glory and worship." There is wisdom, for "much experience is the crown of old men." And "the fear of the LORD is honour, and glory, and gladness, and a crown of rejoicing." With these, and others like them, the LORD crowns us in His mercy and loving-kindness, crowning His own gifts, not our merits.

Isa. lxii. 3.

Cant. iii. 11.

1 Thess. ii.

19.

Ps. viii. 5.

Ecclus. xxv.

6.

Ecclus. i. 11.

A.

*Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, and especially that good thing of the Holy Eucharist, the rich food of His own Body and Blood, as well as with the blessedness of heaven and the crowning felicity of the Beatific Vision, satiating and surpassing all our desire* (Vulg.) And a Jewish commentator wisely adverts here to the proof of God's pre-eminent skill as a Physician, in that He not only heals us, and snatches us out of the very jaws of death, but that when we are faint, and loathe not only medicine, but even food, He, instead of exhibiting nauseous drugs, offers such pleasant and dainty remedies, that they are eagerly swallowed, and bring back appetite, health, and vigour to the patient, so that his *youth is renewed as an eagle's* (A.V., LXX., Vulg.) This renovation of the eagle is correctly referred by S. Jerome to the moulting of that bird, after which all feathered creatures seem to obtain fresh strength and activity, which is of course more noteworthy in the large and powerful eagle than in smaller birds. But a wild Rabbinical legend that the eagle, once in every ten years, till it reaches a century of life, flies so high in air that its wings are scorched to cinders in the blaze of the sun, and that it then falls headlong into the sea, whence it emerges with new plumage and renewed strength, has been eagerly caught up by some of the mediæval commentators, who allegorize it of man, having his old sins scorched up by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and then, plunging into the waters of Baptism, coming forth born again to God. S. Augustine recounts another piece of natural history, only less wonderful, to the effect that the upper beak of the eagle gradually enlarges with time, till it completely overgrows and as it were locks the under one by curving round it, so that the bird is on the point of starvation, till instinct urges it to break the upper beak away by dashing it violently against a rock, whereupon it resumes its feeding and recovers its strength; which the Saint explains of the sinner's recourse to that Rock which is CHRIST, and of the food which He bestows on

Cd.

R. Kimchi.

S. Hieron.

R. Saadias.

Agellius.

De Muis.

S. Pet. Dam.

Honorius.

A.



L. the famished soul. The interpretations of the renewal here as that of regeneration, of repentance, or of resurrection, are common to all the expositors; as also the notion of the lofty and rapid ascent in holiness and glory of the soul which has thus obtained new vigour, "for they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary: they shall walk, and not faint."

Titelman.

Isa. xl. 31.

6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment: for all them that are oppressed with wrong.

S. Basil. M. This He did for us men, when we were oppressed by the wrong-doing of the enemy that held us in bondage, for He executed *righteousness*, or, as LXX. and Vulgate read, *mercies*, for man in redeeming him with His own Blood, while at the same time executing *judgment* in overthrowing the dominion of our spiritual foes, triumphing over them openly on the Cross; of which twofold operation the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, accompanied by the plagues and destruction of their oppressors, was a type. And the verse teaches us that lesson inculcated in another place, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the LORD," warning us therefore not to take the office of revenging our wrongs with our own hands, but to imitate the patience of the Saints in leaving it in His, for, as the Wise Man has written, "He that revengeth shall find vengeance of the LORD, and He will surely retain his sins."

S. Chrysost.

Didymus.

Eusebius.

Hugo Card.

Rom. xii. 19.

Eccles.

xxviii. 1.

7 He showed his ways unto Moses: his works unto the children of Israel.

S. Chrysost. Those *ways* of God were the precepts He delivered to Moses, and they are so named, partly because they were designed for the Israelites to walk in, and partly because the Law itself was but a transition to the Gospel, a road to the fuller dispensation of grace. And in that it is said in another place, "All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth," *He showed His ways unto Moses* when the Prophet besought Him, saying, "Show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee," and He made that proclamation before him as He passed by, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." He made known *His works unto the children of Israel*, in permitting them to behold the miracles He wrought in the deliverance out of Egypt, and for their sustenance or their chastisement in the wilderness.

Ps. xlv. 9.

Agellius.

Ex. xxxiii.

13.

Exod. xxxiv.

6.

Bellarmino.



The LXX. and Vulgate for *works* read *will*s, and they explain that though the will of God is one and indivisible, yet in its multiplicity of effects it may be spoken of as manifold. Some will have it that there is a marked distinction to be drawn here between the knowledge communicated to Moses, as God's faithful servant and interpreter, who was suffered to know His *ways*, and that given to the rebellious people, who were told His *will*, which they did not obey, and therefore never attained to true knowledge of His ways, so as to walk in them. And as He literally taught Moses the road by which the Israelites were to journey towards Canaan, while enjoining on them simply obedience to the leader He had set over them, so in the Church He makes known His ways to His Saints, teaching them the inner secrets of the spiritual life and of the path to heaven, while instructing the general mass of believers simply as to what His will is, which is plainly set before us, "for this is the will of God; even your sanctification."

L.

C.

Hugo Card.

A.

Cd.

1 Thess. iv. 3.

8 The LORD is full of compassion and mercy : long-suffering, and of great goodness.

These four titles denote all the bounties of God, from the first to the last. The first is the grace of predestination, or the eternal love of God; then follow the gift of justification and the remission of our various sins, and finally there is added the crown of glory, which He bestows on penitent sinners.

Bellarmino.

Agellius.

9 He will not alway be chiding : neither keepeth he his anger for ever.

He does chide us in this world, from the cradle to the grave, in chastising us for our sins, and in purifying us with trials and afflictions; but He reserves His mercies for us in the perfect happiness of His kingdom. We have a pledge of this in that, while we were yet in our sins, He justified us, and gave us blessings instead of parental punishments. And, spoken especially of His chosen people, the words tell us of the final restoration and conversion of Israel, so long suffering under the wrath of God. They are careful to warn us that the verse does not prove the Universalist theory, as it is dealing only with the promises of God to His elect and to all penitent souls, not to such as harden themselves in sin, who must look for wrath and fiery indignation.

A.

B.

C.

S. Chrysost.

D. C.

Bellarmino.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins : nor rewarded us according to our wickednesses.

That is, as some will have it, He has not punished our



Honorius.  
Ric. Hamp.

original guilt, but has rather shown us how we may be cleansed from it, nor has He straightway taken vengeance on our actual transgressions, but has given us time and means of repentance. And others remind us that when He does punish, it is with far greater leniency than our guilt merits. So Ezra makes his confession: "And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that Thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given such deliverance as this, should we again break Thy commandments?"

Hugo Card.  
Ezra ix. 13.

11 For look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth : so great is his mercy also towards them that fear him.

12 Look how wide also the east is from the west : so far hath he set our sins from us.

L.

Lorinus, writing at a time when Galileo was but on the track of his astronomical discoveries, and when the almost total lack of instruments narrowed the range of observation and even of conjecture, endeavours to exhibit the forcible nature of these similes by setting before his readers some calculations as to the vast distances of the heavenly bodies from us, the extent of the firmament which is penetrable to our gaze. It is enough to say, in briefly substituting some of the incomparably greater results of modern science for those which the learned Jesuit offered his readers two centuries and a half ago, that there are nebulae visible to the telescope now, but too distant to be resolvable into separate stars, whence light, travelling at the rate of twelve millions of miles in a minute, must have required seven hundred thousand years to reach our earth ; that at the very least one hundred millions of stars believed to be suns, the centres of planetary systems like our own, are countable, each of which systems revolves in a minimum orbit of six thousand millions of miles, and is probably distant from its next neighbour nineteen billions of miles ; while all this inconceivable vastness is merely one tiny point in space which our feeble organs and imperfect instruments have enabled us to observe and map out. So great is His mercy, so far hath He set our sins from us. For He hath caused our sins to set in the grave of Baptism, and made the Man, Whose Name is the East, the Sun of Righteousness, the Day-star, to arise in our hearts, so that we, who were sometimes darkness, are now light in the Lord, Who ascended to the height of heaven from the earth, shows His mercy thence to those that fear Him, by His perpetual mediation on behalf of His tried and suffering Church. In the mention of the East and West there may be very possibly a reference to the restoration of the Jewish exiles from Babylon to their own land. And a Rabbinical commentator

A.  
C.

Honorius.  
2 S. Pet. i.  
19.  
Eph. v. 8.

R. Kimchl.  
De Muis.



observes that we do not find the North and South named, because much of the space lying between their extreme points is uninhabitable by man, owing to the bitter cold, whereas life can be supported in every part of East and West, which therefore serve as better types of the fostering love of God.

13 Yea, like as a father pitieth his own children : even so is the LORD merciful unto them that fear him.

14 For he knoweth whereof we are made : he remembereth that we are but dust.

Let Him be as stern as He will, He is our FATHER. He hath scourged us, hath afflicted us, hath crushed us ; He is our FATHER. Son, if thou weepest, weep under a FATHER's hand, be not angered nor violent in pride. What thou sufferest, what thou lamentest, is not punishment, but medicine, it is chastisement, not condemnation. Refuse not the scourge, if thou wouldst not be ousted from thine heritage. Think not of the pain of the scourge, but of thy place in the testament ; *for He knoweth whereof we are made*, He knoweth our weakness, our proneness to sin, the fuel of evil that abides within us. He knows what He made, how it fell, how it may be restored, adopted, enriched. Behold, we were made out of clay. "The first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second man is the LORD from heaven." Observe, too, that a father's affection for his children is of much earlier date than theirs for him. He cares for them even before their birth, bears with their childish faults, provides them with all necessities, and rules them, usually, with more justice and firmness than their mother ; while, on the other hand, children need to emerge out of infancy before they begin to have any intelligent love for their fathers, and it rarely becomes their task to contribute to their support. Whence we are here taught the lesson that God's love and care for us does not depend on our goodness, but on His own, and that we are not less His children, nor less the objects of His tenderness when we rebel against Him, *for He remembereth that we are but dust*, and making full allowance for our frailty, is more ready to forgive than we to sin.

A.  
Targum.  
D. C.  
1 Cor. xv. 47.  
Ay.  
De Muis.  
Bellarmine.

15 The days of man are but as grass : for he flourisheth as a flower of the field.

16 For as soon as the wind goeth over it, it is gone : and the place thereof shall know it no more.

The simile of man's frailty which occurs in Ps. xc. 5, 6, is here presented afresh, with two additional circumstances to heighten it ; the comparison with the *flower of the field*, and



- the mention of the *wind* as sufficient to destroy it, instead of the scythe implied in the former passage. The commentators dwell on the contrast between a flower of the *field*, left to itself, untended, and therefore withering for lack of moisture when the heats come, and the flower of a *garden*, sheltered from the too scorching rays of the sun, and carefully watered. And, further, as a field is designed for the plough, unlike a wood or a meadow, a field-flower has little prospect of being allowed to live out its span, as it is uprooted or cut down in the act of making the furrows, if it be not even sooner cropped by cattle as they graze. *As soon as the wind goeth over it, it is gone.* This is the true sense of the text, confirmed by the parallel passage in Isaiah: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it;" and the reference is to the hot wind of the desert, parching up the herbage suddenly. But the LXX. and Vulgate, taking a different sense of the Hebrew רוּחַ, translate it as *spirit*, and most of the commentators then explain it as meaning either the breath, the vital principle, or the soul of man, thus: *For the spirit will pass (hath passed, LXX.) through him, and he will not abide*, meaning either that he will cease to draw his breath, and will therefore die; or that vital power will forsake him; or, again, that the soul will be parted from the body. And this meaning can be fairly defended by a similar passage in another Psalm, "For He considered that they were but flesh: and that they were even a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again." There are one or two mystical senses proposed also, of which the most noteworthy are, that the words refer to the unseen passage of the Angel of Death, as he comes to take the soul away; or else to the loss of the principle of grace and strength on the part of our first parents, so that they could not *abide*, but fell from Paradise, so that their place knew them no more. The last clause is slightly changed in construction by LXX. and Vulgate, *He shall know his place no more.* That is, the dead cannot return to animate their bodies, nor to resume their former state and employment; and we may gather also from the words a presage of the fuller teaching of S. Paul on the Resurrection, that our revived bodies will not be numerically and physically identical with those which died, nor will the revival itself be according to natural laws. Others deduce from the words an argument for the unconsciousness of the dead as to what takes place in this world, save in the case of special revelation. Cardinal Bellarmine suggests a more profitable lesson, by bidding us observe how the heavenly bodies, albeit constantly moving, revolve in vast orbits, and do return, unchanged, to their former place, whereas things sprung from earth are in constant process of change and decay, and can never retain, much less recover, the vigour of their prime, an allegory which needs no explanatory gloss.
- Agellius.
- S. Bruno  
Carth.  
Honorius.
- Cd.  
Targum.  
Aben-Ezra.  
R. Kimchi.  
Isa. xl. 7.  
Titelman.  
Agellius.
- Z.  
P.  
Lyranus.
- Bellarmino.  
Ps. lxxviii.  
40.
- Anon. Græc.
- Ay.
- L.  
Cajetanus.  
P.  
Ay.  
D. C.
- Bellarmino.



17 But the merciful goodness of the LORD endureth for ever and ever upon them that fear him : and his righteousness upon children's children ;

18 Even upon such as keep his covenant : and think upon his commandments to do them.

The LXX. and Vulgate mode of rendering *for ever and ever* here is *from eternity to eternity*, whence the commentators explain the sense as denoting the everlasting predestination of God to save mankind by the sacrifice of the immaculate Lamb, and the everlasting duration of the blessedness thereby obtained for us. And we may notice the contrast between His mercy and ours, for it is written, "Your goodness (*mercy*, marg.) is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away." *Upon them that fear Him.* This holds not only under the Law, but under the Gospel, for the same condition is expressed by the Blessed Virgin in the Magnificat; and we may obtain the merciful goodness of the LORD by penitence, as He will grant us justification in return for contrition, sanctification for confession, and the grace of obedience when we make satisfaction.

*And His righteousness upon children's children.* Hence we may gather the continuance of mercy for Israel, whatever time it may repent and believe, for, as S. Peter declared to the Jews in his Pentecostal sermon, "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the LORD our God shall call." And S. Augustine bids us remember that this does not exclude the barren; for men's works are, in a sense, their offspring, so that the promise here is first that God's mercy, in approval and co-operation, is upon these works, and then upon the children of all such works, namely, the rewards which follow them. And with this interpretation we shall do well in understanding the eighteenth verse as referring not to the children, as it seems at the first glance, (which, however, would be mere iteration of the first clause) but to the parents, for whose sake, and because of whose faithfulness and obedience, blessing is bestowed on their descendants, though not necessarily on all without distinction. So we read that when the dying patriarch Jacob was laying his hands in benediction on Ephraim and Manasseh, it is not said that he blessed *them*, but "he blessed Joseph," that is, he knew that the most precious benediction to Joseph would be one which descended to his children. There is a difference between *keeping the covenant* of God, and thinking upon His commandments *to do them*. The first need not necessarily imply more than observance of the prohibitory laws, while the second denotes fulfilment of the positive ones; or yet more fully, *keeping* is storing the seed carefully in a granary; *doing* is planting it in the ground, that it may bring forth abundant fruit; a

S. Bernard.  
Ep. 107.

Hugo Card.  
S. Greg. M.  
L.

Hosea vi. 4.  
Ay.

S. Luke i.  
50.

Cocceius.

Acta ii. 39.

A.  
S. Prosper.  
Hugo Card.

Agellius.  
Cocceius.

Gen. xlviii.  
15.

L.  
Hugo Card.



notion well brought out by the Talmudic parable of the man who left a bag of corn in charge of a friend; and on his return from a journey, asked for his deposit, and was shown a field of waving wheat instead of the small parcel which he expected. We are all bound to God in the covenant made with Him in Baptism, and have His Scriptures to teach us what are the commandments thereby made binding upon us. But Holy Writ, to those who merely think upon it, and admire its beauties, but do not put its precepts in action, is as the voice of Ezekiel to the rebellious Jews, "They hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but do them not." Accordingly, the Fathers use many similes to describe the uselessness of mere reading of Scripture apart from living it. It is like, says one, having a table spread with meat and drink, but taking no food from it. It is like an armoury, whence you borrow no weapon, observes a second. It is a well whence you draw no water, a dispensary whence you take no medicine, a garden whence you gather no flowers, a treasury whence you extract no wealth, as the Golden-mouthed preacher forcibly urges.

### 19 The LORD hath prepared his seat in heaven : and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Cocceius. Not on earth, in the sanctuary of the Temple, ruling over the Jews alone, as aforetime; but now ascended, the LORD, the SON, assumes the throne which the LORD, the FATHER, hath prepared for Him and rules all creation, Jews, Gentiles, angels, and spirits alike. And therefore we, if we wish to stand by that throne, if we would gain the merciful goodness of the former verse, must have "our conversation in heaven," "where CHRIST sitteth on the right hand of God." The LORD hath prepared His seat not merely as a throne, but as the place of judgment, and it is added that *His Kingdom ruleth over all*, to teach us that He is not a Judge under a king, but is Himself at once supreme Judge and King, Whose citation none can resist, against Whose sentence none may appeal. Mystically, they remind us that the Church, the practice of holiness, and the devout soul, are all seats of the LORD, and true heavens, as well as that celestial home of the Angels, where He is lifted above the Thrones. And as the word *seat* may be used in three senses, for the chair of a teacher, the tribunal of a judge, and the throne of a king, so CHRIST the LORD dwells in this threefold fashion in the righteous soul, as Teacher of its reasoning faculties, as Judge over its passions, as King over its will and desires.

Le Blanc.

A.

Ezek. xxxiii.  
31.

Origen, in  
Ps. xxxviii.  
S. Hieron.  
S. Basil. M.  
S. Chrysost.  
Hom. in  
Gen.

Cocceius.

Arnobius.  
Theodoret.

Phil. iii. 20.  
Col. iii. 1.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.

C.  
Bellarmine.

Honorius.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.

D. C.  
Hugo Card.



20 O praise the LORD, ye angels of his, ye that excel in strength : ye that fulfil his commandment, and hearken unto the voice of his words.

21 O praise the LORD, all ye his hosts : ye servants of his that do his pleasure.

Conscious of his own infirmity, the Psalmist desires that not only his weak powers, his soul and all within him, should praise the LORD, but that a worthier homage may be done to Him, and therefore invokes the Angels to take up the strain in clearer and more fitting accents. He calls not only on the Angels, as a special order of celestial beings, but upon all those that *excel in strength*, all God's *hosts*, the whole chivalry of heaven throughout the nine ranks of its hierarchy, to swell the song. And we may observe the apparent inversion in the latter clause of the twentieth verse, where *fulfil* stands before *hearken*, contrary to the natural order. There are three explanations of it. First, that the sentence should run, "fulfil . . . that ye may hearken;" implying that the Angels are not like men, who do God's will in hope of reward, but that obedience itself is the reward, pleasure, and glory of the heavenly spirits, who look for nothing further. The second is, that the phrase denotes the swiftness of their obedience and execution, in that their task is accomplished at the instant when the command is uttered. Thirdly, and best; they not only obey such orders as are given them, but stand waiting and listening intently, to catch the first intimation of the Divine will.

Eusebius.

S. Athanasius.  
Theodoret.Targum.  
R. Kimchi.Agellius.  
Cd.

Kay.

Who best

Milton.

Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best : His state  
Is kingly, thousands at His bidding speed,  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest,  
They also serve who only stand and wait.

The frequent use of the word *Angel* to denote a messenger, has led some of the commentators to apply these verses in a secondary sense to the preachers of the Gospel or to the priests of the Church, alike bound to serve and praise God in voice and acts. *Ye servants of His*. In this epithet the majesty of God is set before us, in that they who just before are described as excelling in strength, are now declared to be but *ministers to do His pleasure*. And that *pleasure* that they should minister to the heirs of salvation. In Holy Writ, before the coming of CHRIST, we find that the Angels who appeared to men accepted their reverence and homage, as when David and the elders fell down before the destroying angel, and Daniel before Gabriel; but after the Ascension of CHRIST, the Angels refuse all such marks of respect, saying, as twice to the Beloved Disciple, "See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant," for now they see that human nature, once

S. Bruno  
Carth.  
Hugo Card.S. Greg. M.  
Hom. 8 in  
Evang.1 Chron.  
xxi. 16.  
Dan. ix. 17.Rev. xix. 10;  
xxii. 9.



so far below them, is exalted above them in supreme dominion.

The Hymn,  
*Æternæ Res*  
*altissime.*

The Angels tremble as they see  
The lot of mortals altering,  
Flesh sins, but flesh again sets free,  
And GOD, the Flesh of GOD, is King.

22 O speak good of the LORD, all ye works of his,  
in all places of his dominion : praise thou the LORD,  
O my soul.

Lyræus.

It is possible for *all the works* of GOD to praise Him, though not in the same fashion. His intellectual creatures praise Him consciously and audibly, as witnesses of His might and glory, His irrational and inanimate works praise Him silently, by fulfilling exactly the end of their creation, and by teaching men somewhat of His power and goodness, so that they are quickened to praise Him anew,

Coleridge,  
Hymn in the  
Vale of  
Chamouni.

And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,  
Earth, with ten thousand voices, praises GOD.

Gloss.  
Interlin.

Theodoret.

Ps. cxxxvii.  
4.

S. John iv.  
21.

C.

S. Chrysost.

Mal. i. 11.

A.

1 Tim. ii. 8.

A.

*In all places of His dominion.* Where GOD has no dominion, there is no need to praise Him; but wherever He hath dominion, He is to be praised, and as that is everywhere, no one can be excused from paying this homage. They are no words for the Jews, observes a Greek Father, for they, tied to one spot for their worship, asked "How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?" But we have been taught by the LORD Himself in His words to the woman of Samaria, "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the FATHER; . . . but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the FATHER in spirit and in truth;" in that Holy Catholic Church which is made up of all nations, and spread through all lands, so that from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, in every place incense is offered unto the Name of GOD, and a pure offering, because all the earth has been purged with the Blood of CHRIST, and men may now "pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands." *Praise the Lord, O my soul.* The last verse is the same as the first, praise at the outset, praise at the close; we have set out with praise, may it be our lot to return thither, and reign where it is everlasting, where the heavenly hosts praise the FATHER, where all the works of creation praise the WORD by Whom all things were made, where the souls of ransomed men praise the SPIRIT, Who hath sanctified them.

Wherefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, Who pitieth His own children;  
glory be to the SON, Who hath prepared His seat for judg-



ment in heaven ; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who healeth all our infirmities.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

## COLLECTS.

O LORD, heal the infirmities of Thy people, Who dost always *Ludolph.* pity sinners as a father his children ; that delivered from the destruction of everlasting death, our soul may praise Thee, and our life glorify Thee. (1.)

O LORD of mercy and compassion, be not angry with us *Mozarabic.* for ever : but so far as the east is from the west, put all our sins from us, and as high as the heaven is from the earth, magnify Thy mercy amongst us. (11.)

Let our soul bless Thee, O LORD, and all that is within *Mozarabic.* it cry aloud together in Thy praise, that Thou mayest hear our prayer and hasten to heal our infirmities, and ransom our life from destruction, satisfy our desire with good things, and crown our wish with fulfilment. (11.)

O GOD, the SAVIOUR of them that live, Who desirest not the death of sinners, know, as a merciful FATHER, that which Thou hast made, and be not angry with us sinners for evermore, but stablish Thy mercy upon us, and deliver our life from destruction. (1.)

D. C.

## PSALM CIV.

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate : Of David. Complutensian LXX. : A Psalm of David, on the constitution of the world.

## ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. The Voice of the Church praising GOD, and recounting His works. The Voice of the Prophet touching the fabric of the whole reconciled world. The Voice of the HOLY GHOST touching the fabric of the world. The Voice of the Apostles concerning the Jews.

VEN. BEDÆ. David denotes the person of the speaker, but the whole Song is in honour of CHRIST the LORD, Who is Creator, and Ruler, and Redeemer of the world.

The Prophet, desiring to signify divine mysteries by the order of nature, first sings of the Sacraments of CHRIST and the Church under the type of the formation of heaven and earth : *Praise the Lord, O my soul.* In the second part, he enumerates the works of the LORD veiled under divers figures : *O Lord, how manifold are Thy works.*

III.

P



In the third place, he declares that in the everlasting world he will unceasingly utter the praises of the LORD, which he had made his song, even in his short life here: *I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will praise my God while I have my being.*

**SYRIAC PSALTER.** Of David, when he was going to worship before the Ark of the LORD together with the Priests. As regards us, it teaches us Confession and Prayer. And it gives us information touching the first beginning and order of creation, and tells somewhat of the Angels.

**EUSEBIUS OF CESAREA.** The Doctrine of Confession.

**S. ATHANASIUS.** A Psalm of exhortation and as though of command.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian.* Saturday: Matins. [Whitsunday: Matins. Transfiguration: III. Nocturn.]

*Monastic.* Saturday: I. Nocturn. [Transfiguration: II. Nocturn.]

*Ambrosian.* Friday of Second Week: I. Nocturn.

*Parisian.* Monday: Matins.

*Lyons.* Saturday: Matins.

*Quignon.* Monday: Lauds.

*Eastern Church.* Prefatory Psalm at Vespers.

#### ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* Praise \* the LORD, O my soul. [Whitsunday: Send forth Thy SPIRIT, and they shall be created, and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth. Alleluia. Alleluia. Transfiguration: He is clothed with majesty and honour \* decked with light as it were with a garment.]

*Ambrosian.* As Psalm 102.

*Parisian.* All \* hast Thou made in wisdom, O LORD, the earth is full of Thy possession.

*Lyons.* Praise \* the LORD, O my soul.

*Mozarabic.* Thou art clothed with majesty and honour \* Thou deckest Thyself with light as it were with a garment.

This Psalm, the anthem of Natural Theology, and, as it were, the poetical re-casting of the Mosaic record of creation, sets before us, as no other part of Holy Scripture save, perhaps, the closing chapters of Job, the continual dependence of the universe on the guiding and sustaining influence of the Creator, Who is depicted throughout as the life which moves and energizes the whole mass, not as the maker of a machine, withdrawn from the work of His hands.

In its main outline, it follows the order of the Hexaëmeron in Genesis, beginning with the origin of light, and leading up to the formation of man, but it represents the process as a living and continuous evolution, rather than as a memory of a great event in the remote past. Less specific in its details than the *Benedicite*, it is more graphic and vivid in portraiture, and those who have pondered more deeply on the profound analogies which exist between the world of sense and that of thought, between the natural and the



spiritual creation, will find it most easy to recognize the lessons of mystical theology which underlie, at no great distance from the surface, the letter of this magnificent poem. It is the first of the Alleluistic Psalms in the Hebrew reckoning, but as the LXX. and Vulgate attribute that character to the succeeding one, the question will be discussed when treating of it.

1 Praise the LORD, O my soul : O LORD my God, thou art become exceeding glorious ; thou art clothed with majesty and honour.

The Prophet calls on himself to bless the LORD, and knowing how mighty is the grace of unity in the Faith, he speaks to himself alone that which he would exhort all men. He saith, *Thou art become exceeding great*. We need to inquire closely into the force of these words, for was He at any time not great, that He should become great through men's praises? Or what can be added unto Him, Who is the wonderful and incomprehensible fulness of all might? But God is magnified amongst men, when He is plainly seen by them to be great and exalted, so that they feel Him to be their Maker, the bestower of all good things, their Redeemer, and finally, their Judge. So, too, to *put on*, is to be clothed with some covering which one had not before. But when did God lack *beauty* (Vulg.), Who ever bestoweth all lovely things upon His creatures? Never ; but till He created the world, He was, so to speak, bare and unadorned, and unknown, but then, by making *confession and beauty* (Vulg.) that is, beautiful and graceful things, whereby He could be known and praised, He clad Himself therewith. And He became yet better known, yet more truly magnified, by His Incarnation, even in its very lowliness, He was glorious in His Resurrection, exceeding glorious in His Ascension, exceeding glorious, because exceeding humbled first, for "Wisdom lifteth up the head of the lowly." Now, enthroned in the highest, He is clothed with the *majesty* of heaven, with the *honour* paid Him by adoring Angels ; and on earth, in His Church, He is girt about with the *confession* of repentant sinners, whom He robes in the beauty of His own righteousness.

2 Thou deckest thyself with light as it were with a garment : and spreadest out the heavens like a curtain.

CHRIST our LORD is revealed in these words as the Great High Priest of His own universe, clad in the white vesture of perpetual holiness, while the heavens are spread around Him as "the tent for Him to dwell in," the Tabernacle whence He pours down His benediction, as they are also the scene of His perpetual intercession for mankind. In the first literal sense, the verse describes the manner in which God,



<sup>1</sup> Tim. vi. 16. "Whom no man hath seen, or can see: dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto," has yet created light as conveying to our minds the best image of Himself, His ineffable radiance and unimaginable purity; according to that saying, "Light is the shadow of God;" whence some imagine that in this place the shining forms of the Angels, encompassing the throne of God, and deriving all their glory from vision of Him, are intended; or, as others will have it, the heavens themselves, studded with constellations as though with jewels, are the garment of the Most High. Others prefer, however, to read the words in the sense of the Apostle's saying, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all," and to understand here the uncreated and vital glory of His essence. The pure and stainless Manhood which the LORD took of His Virgin Mother, whereby He became known and visible to mortals, was likewise a garment of light, by reason of its holiness and the revelation it made; and its true beauty was disclosed for a little to the three Apostles in the vision of the Transfiguration; while a like glory, by Divine favour, encompassed the mystic woman of the Apocalypse (whether we take her as the Blessed Mary or as the personified Church), clothed as she is with the sun, borne up on the moon, and diademed with twelve stars. *And spreadest out the heavens like a curtain.* How He did this thing, that He might clothe Himself with the Church as a garment of light, the Psalmist would fain set before us in certain typical mysteries; how the Church was made to be light, without spot or wrinkle, but white and shining in the raiment of her Spouse; we may observe by noting these words, *like a skin* (Vulg.), denoting the perfect ease with which God deals with His vast creation, far more readily than a shepherd pitches a tent, or a man unrolls a scroll, because His word alone is enough to effect His will; a marked contrast with the toil and pain which men must put forth in any trifling enlargement of their fixed dwellings or their roofs. That *skin* which He has stretched forth for us, is the great scroll of Holy Scripture, for as the parchment skin on which we write is taken from the bodies of dead animals, so the Bible was set forth by God for man after he fell by sin into the power of death. Out of that skin of death the heaven of Scripture was made, and while the living Prophets and Apostles were, for the most part, known to but few, and restricted within narrow limits, they, being dead, yet speak, and are now far more widely known and familiar, for while they yet lived, the skin was not stretched out, the heaven was not yet extended.

L.  
D. C.  
<sup>1</sup> S. John 1.  
5.  
S. Pet.  
Chrysol.  
Serm. 82.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.

L.  
Rev. xii. 1.  
A.

Ay. And whereas it was the valiant martyrdom of the Apostles and early Saints which spread their teaching far and wide in that Gentile world out into which the Jews drove them; now, on the other hand, there is little progress made in the conversion of heathen nations, because preachers and missionaries have no love for martyrdom, and do not care to peril their



lives for the Gospel; wherefore the LORD complains of them by His Prophet: "There is none to stretch forth My tent any more, and to set up My curtains, for the pastors have become brutish, and have not sought the LORD." The heavens are spread out like a parchment also, that they may be a great roll wherein the countless names of CHRIST'S Saints can be written, they are spread out as the curtains of a tent, to be the tabernacle wherein those Saints shall dwell; the new heavens, that is, which shall take the place of that former "heaven, departed as a scroll when it is rolled together." The Church Militant here in earth, a fairer heaven than the visible sky, enlightened by the Sun of wisdom and the moon of knowledge, studded with the starry examples of the Saints, is spread out like a tabernacle as a shelter and refuge for all who need it, as a shrine wherein perpetual worship is offered to the LORD. And it is most rightly said to be *stretched out*, for whereas only the righteous might seem to have any claim to it, yet God's mercy has extended it so as to embrace the publican, the harlot, and the sinner, whom He thus shelters in the dwelling of the Bride, in token of His folding them Himself in the all-embracing love of the everlasting arms. And as each holy soul is His heaven too, He stretches it out by enlarging its charity, and that in such self-denial and mortification as is typified by the skin, implying, as we saw before, the idea of death.

Jer. x. 20.

S. Ambros.

Rev. vi. 14.

Isa. xxxiv.

S. Epiph.

Serm. in

Resurr.

Le Blanc.

C.

S. Albertus

Magnus.

3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters : and maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind.

The Hebrew is more properly *upper chambers*, (as LXX. *ὑπερφῶν*) and the literal notion is that the dark and thick rain-clouds are, as it were, the foundations of God's heavenly dwelling, while the bright ethereal clouds, much higher in the atmosphere, are the *upper chambers* resting upon them. It is to be noted that the Latin word expressive of this same idea, *cœnaculum*, is used by Ennius and Plautus in the sense of the dwelling-place of the Gods in heaven. The ancient commentators, however, almost universally understand the phrase to denote a stratum of water superimposed, as a roof, above the visible sky, in fact, as "the waters above the firmament" of the Book of Genesis, and enter at length into physical theories which are more ingenious than tenable or instructive, though closely adhering to the Vulgate, rendering here *Who coverest the upper parts thereof with water*, which does not differ materially from the Chaldee paraphrase. The mystical sense of the true meaning is, nevertheless, recognized by Hesychius, who refers the verse to the Sacrament of Baptism, the foundation of that spiritual life which rises far into the heights of heaven; albeit he seems to think, like a Latin commentator, that the idea presented is the immer-

Clericus.

Gen. i. 7.

Targum.

Cd.

Arnobius.



A.

The Gloss.  
S. John vii.  
38.  
Alcuin.

S. Greg.  
Naz.  
Orat. 44,  
in Pentec.

sion and covering over of the body of the neophyte with the waters of the baptistery. The Latins explain the *upper parts* of the heaven of Scripture to be charity, as the chief of graces, and this, they say, is roofed over by the HOLY SPIRIT, typified by the *waters*; while another view is, that we may here understand the surface letter of Holy Writ, covered over with deep mystical meanings. And a Saint reminds us how an *upper chamber* was the scene of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, as also of the descent of the Paraclete in fiery tongues, in type of our co-operation with God, as He comes down to meet us, who have ascended a little way to meet Him. And though he follows the notion of the waters covering the chamber, he might better have referred to the common phrase of "ascending from the laver of baptism," so often met in early Christian writings.

*And maketh the clouds His chariot.* The notion here presented is that of the noise of peals of thunder, resembling the roll of heavy wheels, while the swift movement of the lighter clouds through the air suggests the rapid pace of horses. Thus Horace:

Hor. Od. i.  
34.

Namque Diespiter

Igni corusco nubila dividens  
Plerumque, per purum sonantes  
Egit equos, celeremque currum.

For the Lord of skies,  
Though wont to cleave the clouds with vivid flame,  
Through the clear heavens drove his echoing steeds,  
And chariot fleet.

Titelman.

Hesychius.

Acts i. 9.

A.

Hugo Card.

Targum.

A.

C.

S. Greg. M.

In such a chariot as this the LORD came to battle against the Egyptians, in such a one He descended to give the Law on Sinai, and when He went up, forty days after Easter, from Olivet in the presence of the Apostles, "a cloud received Him out of their sight." He is still borne into all regions of the world, into the hearts of countless disciples, by His true preachers, *clouds* which are high above the level of earth, which pour down the refreshing rain of doctrine, which are borne along by the mighty rushing wind of the HOLY GHOST, which flash and blaze with the light of holiness and the power of miracles. *And walketh upon the wings of the wind.* This is expounded by the Chaldee paraphrast into "clouds swift as the wings of an eagle." And the notion is accepted by most of the Fathers, who see here simply a type of the rapidity of God's operations, though they add a mystical sense also, taking the *winds* or *spirits* to mean righteous souls, on which God treads as His path, when they put themselves under His feet in loving subjection. But we may very well take the words in close connection with the immediately preceding clause, and interpret them as the corresponding passage of Ps. xviii. 10, of the swiftness with which the preaching of the



Gospel was communicated to the world from its starting-point at Jerusalem.

4 He maketh his angels spirits : and his ministers a flaming fire.

If it were not for the gloss upon this verse in the Epistle to the Hebrews (and for the plural predicate in the second clause following a subject in the singular) its most obvious literal sense would be, *He maketh the winds His messengers, and the flaming fire His ministers*, as when He used a wind to dry the Red Sea before Israel, and when He sent fire on the cities of the plain. But the construction as given above is that of the New Testament citation, which may be explained in two ways ; first, that God gives His angelic messengers the swiftness of the winds, and the mighty force of burning flame, as we read of the horses and chariots of fire which caught away Elijah, and compassed Elisha in Dothan ; not that their faculties are limited to this extent, but because these are the most striking similes at hand. The other view is nearer to the grammatical construction, and is that He maketh His spirits messengers to bear His will to men, and especially chooses out those who are kindled and glowing with the fervour of heavenly love. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Bellarmine.

Heb. i.

R. Shelomo.

Targum.

Theodoret.

S. Thomas Aquin.

Honorius.

A.

S. Greg. M.

Hom. 34 in Evang.

Heb. i. 14.

And is there care in heaven ? And is there love  
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,  
That may compassion of their evils move ?  
There is :—else much more wretched were the case  
Of men than beasts : But O ! th' exceeding grace  
Of Highest God that loves His creatures so,  
And all His workes with mercy doth embrace,  
That blessed Angels He sends to and fro,  
To serve to wicked man, to serve His wicked foe !

Spenser,  
*Faery  
Queene*, II.  
viii. 1, 2.

How oft do they their silver bowers leave,  
To come to succour us that succour want !  
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave  
The fitting skyes, like flying pursuivant,  
Against fowle feedes to ayd us militant !  
They for us fight, they watch and dewly ward,  
And their bright squadrons round about us plant ;  
And all for love, and nothing for reward :  
O why should heavenly GOD to men have such regard ?

"It should be known," observes S. Gregory, "that the word Angel is a title of office, not a description of nature. For those holy spirits of the heavenly country are always *spirits*, but they cannot always be styled *Angels*, for they are Angels only when some message is brought by them." And S. Jerome will help us to the reason why *fire* is named in this connection : "Angels are sent for various ministries, and especially to those who need purification, and because of former

S. Greg. M.



Ep. 20, ad  
Damas.

L.

Hugo Card.

sins, deserve to be purged in some degree by chastisements." The rushing wind and fiery tongues of Pentecost justify us in applying this verse also to the Divine Commission of preachers of the Word, sent to sweep away the clouds of heathen darkness, and to kindle and enlighten souls with the Gospel, that fire which their Master came to send on the earth.

5 He laid the foundations of the earth : that it never should move at any time.

Cd.

A.

1 Cor. iii. 11.

Rising at once from the thought of the material earth, and that principle of gravity which keeps it in its appointed orbit, they bid us see here the creation of the Church, or of every holy soul which is the microcosm of the Church, steadfast and unshaken in faith, because of the firmness of the base on which it stands, for "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST."

6 Thou coveredst it with the deep like as with a garment : the waters stand in the hills.

7 At thy rebuke they flee : at the voice of thy thunder they are afraid.

8 They go up as high as the hills, and down to the valleys beneath : even unto the place which thou hast appointed for them.

9 Thou hast set them their bounds, which they shall not pass : neither turn again to cover the earth.

Bellarmino.

Gen. i. 9.

Targum.

Bellarmino.

Jer. v. 22.

Job xxxviii.  
11.

This is the description of the gradual emerging of the earth from the shroud of waters which enveloped it at the first : and is in fact but the expansion of that one verse, "And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry ground appear : and it was so." The waters are represented as fleeing hither and thither at the voice of the Lord, and either rising in waves as high as mountains and then sinking into abysses like the valleys, (according to the version above and the Chaldee paraphrase) or else, by their gradual subsidence, permitting the mountains to rise and the valleys to sink into their appointed stations, (which is the sense of the LXX. reading, the A.V. margin, and that of S. Jerome,) and then assuming their own permanent place, namely, the sea and springs, into which they are gathered. Their *bounds* are explained for us in another passage of Holy Writ, "Will ye not tremble at My presence, which have placed the sand for a bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it?" "And I said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further : and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." It is not uninteresting to compare Ovid's description of the harmonizing of chaos, far in-



ferior as it is, merely as a piece of poetry, to this noble Psalm, and those who please may institute further comparison with the seventh book of *Paradise Lost*.

Circumfluus humor  
Ultima possedit, solidumque coëruit orbem.  
Sic ubi dispositam, quisquis fuit ille deorum,  
Congeriem secuit, sectamque in membra redegit.  
Principio terram, ne non æqualis ab omni  
Parte foret, magni speciem glomeravit in orbis.  
Tum freta diffudit, rapidisque tumescere ventis  
Jussit, et ambitæ circumdare littora terræ.  
Addidit et fontes, et stagna immensa lacusque;  
Fluminaque obliquis cinxit declivia ripis:  
Quæ, diversa locis, partim sorbentur ab ipsa,  
In mare perveniunt partim, campoque recepta  
Liberioris aquæ, pro ripis littora pulsan.  
Jussit et extendi campos, subsidere valles,  
Fronde tegi silvas, lapidosos surgere montes.

Ovid. *Meta-*  
*morph.* l. 1. 30.

Moisture, flowing round,  
Seized the last place, and held the strong world bound.  
Some God then clave the huge mass thus prepared,  
And, after cleaving, into sections shared.  
First, that the earth might on all sides appear  
Equal in bulk, he shaped it a great sphere:  
Then poured the billows, bade them swell when fanned  
With gales, and gird the shores of compassed land.  
Gave also springs, meres, broads full widely spread,  
Hemmed the steep rivers in their winding bed,  
(Which, varying in each region, are imbibed  
In part by earth, while part, less circumscribed,  
To ocean's freer plain of waters reach,  
And banked no longer, dash against the beach.)  
And bade the valleys sink, the plains extend,  
The woods be green, the craggy mounts ascend.

The mystical interpretation given to the verses, is the gradual C.  
arising of the Church Catholic out of the wild waves of hea-  
then ignorance and darkness, which stood at first *on the hills*, Hugo Card.  
that is, oppressing and slaying God's chief Saints, but then  
fleeing before the voice of the Sons of Thunder, the Apostles Le Blanc.  
of the Lord, and allowing the mountain heights of saintly con-  
templation, the lowly valleys of devout humility, to be plainly  
seen; while these waters of heathenism, though not altogether  
dried up, shall never again be suffered to sweep over the  
whole earth, whatever partial floods and deluges may waste  
local Churches, but have as their final bound the Second  
Coming of CHRIST, when there shall be "no more sea." Rev. xxi. 1.

10 He sendeth the springs into the rivers: which  
run among the hills.

11 All beasts of the field drink thereof: and the  
wild asses quench their thirst.



12 Beside them shall the fowls of the air have their habitation : and sing among the branches.

Theodoret.  
Bellarmine.  
L.

Hugo Card.  
Ay.  
Exod. xv.  
27.  
Isa. xli. 3.  
S. Matt.  
viii. 1.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

Rev. xli. 1.  
S. Matt. xlii.  
32.

Francis  
Baker.

For the *rivers* we should rather translate *water-courses*, the channels of a torrent down the side of a mountain, which is the exact force of the LXX. *φάργυς*. As the vast expanse of the salt ocean, referred to in the former verses, teaches us the mighty power of God, so His bounty and tenderness, not only to man, but to the lower animals, are set before us now in His provision of the sweet waters whence beasts and birds slake their thirst. The mystical interpretation is that from CHRIST, Who is the Rock, the streams of Gospel doctrine flow down to the valley in the channels which He has grooved in His great mountains, the Apostles (those twelve wells of Elim,) and other eloquent preachers of the Word, so that men, mere *beasts of the field* in comparison with the immortal Angels, draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation, because "when He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him." *Which run among the hills.* The Vulgate, not dissimilarly, reads, *The waters shall pass through in the midst of the mountains*, that is, as it is explained, Christian teaching will flow forth amongst all nations from amidst the harmonious concord of the prelates and rulers of the Church, till not only the tame and domesticated *beasts of the field*, that is, the partially instructed Jews and the more civilized Gentile races, but also the *wild asses*, the untaught and savage heathen, shall alike drink of those cool streams, while the *birds*, the Angels and those holy souls winging on high in prayer and contemplation, shall sing the praises of God *among the branches* of that Tree of Life which grows by the banks of the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," for "the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

Quyte through the streetes, with silver sound,  
The Flood of Life doth flow ;  
Upon whose bankes, on everie syde,  
The Wood of Life doth growe.

There trees for evermore beare fruite,  
And evermore do springe;  
There evermore the Angels sit,  
And evermore doe singe.

A.  
Honorius.  
Hugo Card.

For *among the branches*, however, the LXX. and Vulgate read, *from the midst of the rocks*, which they variously explain as from the firm testimonies of Scripture, from the fellowship of the Apostles, or from the surroundings of a hard and austere life, which causes no sorrow, but singing and gladness to the Saints of the LORD.



13 He watereth the hills from above : the earth is filled with the fruit of thy works.

As the hills are the source of the chief rivers which irrigate the earth, so they (too lofty for those rivers to reach) are in turn watered themselves from God's *chambers* (A. V.) of the clouds, which pour down rain impartially on all those surfaces which are not already moistened by fountains, streams, and lakes, so that the whole *earth*, not merely a few isolated tracts, is *satisfied* (Vulg. A. V.) *with the fruit* of God's works in that it produces the abundant harvests of which the succeeding verses speak. The mystical sense is explained by S. Augustine of the direct and immediate teaching of the Apostles by CHRIST Himself, as for example in the vision of the sheet full of unclean beasts shown to S. Peter, and the conversion of S. Paul on his road to Damascus, so that the torrents of Gospel teaching flowed down upon the plains below through the water-courses of these great hills, and watered the whole earth with the knowledge of the LORD, producing a great harvest of converted sinners. And, remembering that the same word *upper chambers* stands here as in the third verse, we may well bear in mind that assembly of the disciples in Jerusalem, when the fiery rain of the HOLY GHOST came down upon them, and was communicated to the nations far and wide by the sermon of S. Peter and his fellows ; when the multitude from many countries were astonished, as each man heard them speak in his own dialect, and many a one amongst them brought forth fruits meet for repentance, whereof the Prophet saith, "this is all the fruit to take away his sin."

L.

A.

C.

Pseudo-Hieron.

Isa. xxvii. 9.

14 He bringeth forth grass for the cattle : and green herb for the service of men.

15 That he may bring food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man : and oil to make him a cheerful countenance, and bread to strengthen man's heart.

The gradual ripening of the crops, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," is here set before us, with the distinction of the kinds of herbage designed for the use of animals alone from those intended for the benefit of man. The favourite exposition of the former verse is that it denotes the spirit of liberality which the rain of Gospel grace causes to spring up in the hearts of the hearers of the Word, so as to induce them to provide abundantly and cheerfully for the temporal needs of their teachers. "It is true, I see, and acknowledge," observes S. Chrysostom, "the fact is certain, the earth does bring forth grass for cattle and green herb for the service of men. But I see other cattle of the LORD, which are meant when it is said, 'Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.'"

S. Mark iv. 28.

A.

S. Chrysost.

1 Cor. ix. 9.



- Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written.' How then does the earth bring forth grass for the cattle? Because 'the Lord hath ordained that they which preach the Gospel shall live of the Gospel.' He sent forth preachers and said unto them, 'Eat such things as are set before you, for the labourer is worthy of his hire.' And when He said, 'Eat such things as are set before you, lest they should object, 'We shall be despised at the tables of strangers, if we are in want; wouldst Thou have us so intrusive?' No, saith He, it is not a gift of theirs, it is your hire. Hire for what? What do they give, what do they receive? They give spiritual things, they receive carnal things; they give gold, they receive grass. For 'all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field.' All thy temporal superfluity and abundance is grass for the cattle. Hear for what cattle. 'If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?' In like manner the Saint explains *herb for the service of men*, as signifying the same thing, the temporal offerings made to those who have become the servants of men by devoting themselves to the ministry of the Gospel. Another view is that the whole verse has to do, not with paying the hire of labourers, but with bestowing alms on the needy; of whom there are two classes, the noisy, persistent and shameless mendicants, compared to the *cattle*, and the self-respecting, patient, suffering poor, who have a right to the nobler title of *men*. And they cite a saying of an unknown author against indiscriminate almsgiving, which has a Talmudic ring in it: "Let thine alms sweat in thy hand, till thou find a righteous man on whom to bestow it." So the Wise Man saith, "Give to the godly man, and help not the sinners. Do well unto him that is lowly, but give not to the ungodly; hold back thy bread, and give it not unto him, lest he overmaster thee thereby." A happier exposition, however, than either of the above, is that which sees in these verses the gradual unfolding of doctrine, the ascent in spiritual instruction, from the *grass for the cattle*, that is, the plainest and simplest teaching for the perfectly unlearned, and the *green herb for the service of men*, the somewhat more advanced, but still primary catechizing of new converts; to the richer and more solid gifts of *corn*, and *wine*, and *oil*, which are held back for those who are able to receive them. But in each and all, in grass and herb, in corn and wine alike, in the simplest rudiments, and in the profoundest speculations, the food of the soul is one and the same JESUS CHRIST, growing up like a tender plant out of the pure soil of His Virgin Mother, cut down and dried up like grass in the burning heat of the Passion, Himself that Bread which came down from Heaven, and yet was brought out of the earth, once in the Nativity, and again in the Resurrection, to be the spiritual food
- S. Luke x.  
7, 8.
- Isa. xl. 6.
- 1 Cor. ix. 11.
- C.
- Ecclus. xii.  
4.
- Arnobius.
- Hugo Card.
- Isa. llii. 2.
- Ay.



of man, as well in devout thought as in that Blessed Sacrament of His love, wherein He is indeed the *Wine that maketh glad the heart of man*, and the *Bread to strengthen man's heart*. Brev. Rom.  
Off. Corporis  
CHRISTI.

O Tree of Life! O Vine of God! Thou art amid us now;  
The Bread we break, the Wine we bless, are they not very Thou? A. M. Mor-  
gan.  
Veiled in His creatures comes our GOD; He comes Who dwells  
above,  
The altogether lovely, and the Fount and Life of Love.

"O come, ye heavy laden, and henceforth restful be;  
O come, your weary weight of sin long since was laid on Me"—  
This is Thy call, O Merciful; to all who will is given  
To eat supernal Bread and drink the mystic Wine of heaven.

"For how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids." Zech. ix. 17.

*And oil to make him a cheerful countenance.* Our FATHER does not confine His bounty to giving us His SON, to be our food, our joy, and our strength, but He bestows upon us also the blessed Unction of His HOLY SPIRIT, Whom He sent upon the Apostles, and through them, on all redeemed mankind. There is, however, a certain ambiguity in the construction of the Hebrew, which may be turned (as it is nearly by LXX., Vulgate, and S. Jerome,) *in order to make his face cheerful* [as though] *with oil*, taking this as a result produced by the wine, and not that oil is a separate gift, which is, however, the better way. Hence, some of the commentators explain this "oil of gladness" to be grace, wherewith the LORD JESUS is altogether anointed, whence He is named CHRIST, and He anoints His preachers and messengers therewith, that they may give the Gospel freely, and not for sale; while others take it of the Divine mercy which brings man out of his grief into gladness by the remission of sins, and confers upon him that regal chrism which makes him a king and priest to God. Further, we are reminded that oil enters literally into the rites of four sacraments, Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and Unction of the Sick; while mystically the oil of mercy belongs to penance, and that of love to matrimony. One commentator, seeming to bear in mind that saying of Pliny, "There are two liquors most grateful to men's bodies, wine within, oil without," takes the oil here to mean the outward and visible graces and gifts of the SPIRIT, particularly the power of working miracles, which made the face of the Apostles to shine before men, giving them renown and lustre, while the wine signifies the inner working of the same SPIRIT, in heavenly operation upon the soul. If, however, we do take the oil as a qualification of the wine, and not as an independent matter, we may fitly couple it with the last clause of the verse, *bread to strengthen* B.

Agellius.

Ps. xlv. 8.

A.

Haymo.

R.

Hugo Card.

C.

P.

Plin. Hist.  
Nat. lxiv. 22.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

Ewald.



*man's heart*, and take the whole passage of the Holy Eucharist: "For I feel that two things are most especially necessary to me in this life, without which this miserable life will be unbearable to me: Prisoned in the dungeon of this body, I acknowledge that I need two things, to wit, food and light. Therefore Thou hast given me, a sick man, Thy Body for the refreshment of my soul and body, and hast made 'Thy word a lantern unto my feet.' Without these two I cannot live well; for the Word of God is the light of my soul, and Thy Sacrament is the Bread of Life." And one result of that blessed communion is the spirit of martyrdom, the desire of sharing the Passion of CHRIST, a sweet and intoxicating wine pressed out for us from the Vine of the Cross, a food which strengthens man's heart to bear all for JESUS.

S. Thomas à Kempis, Imit. CHRISTI, IV. xi. 4.

Ps. cxix. 105.

S. Cyprian. Ep. 68.

16 The trees of the LORD also are full of sap: even the cedars of Libanus which he hath planted;

17 Wherein the birds make their nests: and the fir-trees are a dwelling for the stork.

L. The *trees of the Lord* are the indigenous ones, not planted by the hand of man, nor tended by human culture. The words of *sap* are not in the Hebrew, and though the meaning does, no doubt, ultimately, come to that, yet the immediate sense rather appears to be *with rain*, which continues the train of thought begun in verse 13. And the intention is to impress further the idea of the sweep and completeness of God's providential care, not only in the creation, but in the maintenance, of the great forest trees, needing no hand but His to tend them. The usual reading of the LXX. here, followed by the Vulgate, is *trees of the plain*, implying their indigenous and wild condition, as distinguished from trees of an orchard or park. These *trees of the Lord* are, they tell us, the Gentile nations, heretofore uncultured and ignorant, but now filled not only with the refreshing showers of heaven, but with the corn and wine, and oil of God. The *cedars of Libanus* come later in order, because He chose the base things of the world first, and filled the lowly and hungry with good things, before turning to the rich and mighty. There are cedars of Libanus in the world which never are so filled, those haughty and ungodly sinners, lying outside the Land of promise, of whom it is written, "The LORD breaketh the cedars of Libanus;" but these, which are filled, are such only as *He hath planted*, for "every plant which My heavenly FATHER hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Note also that *Libanus*, meaning *white*, may be taken in two ways, of the shining pomp and splendour of worldly dignity, and of the purity of soul, the true whiteness of sanctification, conferred by the cleansing waters of heaven; so that here we may, in the latter sense, understand the more eminent Saints as intended.

Haymo. Bellarmine.

A.

Hugo Card.

Ps. xxix. 5.

S. Matt. xv. 13.



*Wherein the birds make their nests.* The word עֲרָבִים, meaning any small birds, is here translated by LXX. and Vulgate as *sparrows*, and the explanation given is that spiritual persons, and especially members of Religious Orders, are supported by the bounty of wealthy and powerful persons, from whose superfluous riches they are fed, in some corners of whose domains they build their convents, aptly called *nests*, because they who erect them are conscious of being mere sojourners, and of having here no continuing city. The insignificance, gregariousness, and homely brown aspect of the sparrow, have made it a not inapt emblem of the monastic societies, and in fact the French name for the bird is *moineau*, "little monk." Happy is that tree, observes Cassiodorus, (himself senator, consul, prime minister, who left all to become a simple monk,) where such a nest is built, for any that contains such an institution may know that it has been planted by God.

A.  
C.S. Bruno  
Carth.

C.

*And the fir-trees are a dwelling-place for the stork.* This, which is the true meaning of the last clause, is so unlike the LXX. and Vulgate reading, that the commentators are of no real assistance in arriving at the mystical sense. This appears to be that the Saints of secular and domestic life are here signified. The *fir-tree*, from its utility in building and joinery, and from its yielding pitch for binding planks together, so as to exclude wind and damp, serves as a type of settled habitation, a notion brought out by the word *house* (A.V., LXX., Vulg.) here contrasting with the *nests* of the earlier clause, and confirmed by the stork's habit of returning year after year to the same spot. The bird itself (called by the Greeks, "most pious of winged creatures,")<sup>1</sup> whose

Hugo Card.  
in Kealiam.Eabrianus  
Feb. xlii.

Hebrew name חֲסִידָה is derived from a root חָסַד, "to be kind," is noted for its tenderness to its young, an affection popularly said to be reciprocated, so that the whole picture adequately corresponds to the suggested meaning. But the LXX. and Vulgate read, *The house of the heron* (ἡροδίου, herodii) *is their leader*, meaning that the larger size of that bird, and the alleged loftiness of its nest, give it a kind of kingship amongst the feathered tribes. The commentators, not being very clear as to the nature of the *herodius*, tell us that it is a bird of prey, of great size and strength, more than a match for the eagle, and thus a type of violent and daring sinners. But if these sinners will be converted, and take refuge with CHRIST, then He Who is the Leader of the birds, of all spiritual and devout souls, becomes the house and shelter of the sinners too, and enables them to overcome the evil spirit whom the eagle typifies. Or again, reading the sentence conversely, they tell us that the bold sinner himself, who has once been the house of the *herodius*, on being converted, becomes the leader of spiritual persons, and emi-

L.

Hugo Card.

<sup>1</sup> πτηνὸν εὐσεβέστατον ἵδμεν.



nent over them in capacity for good now as for evil previously, as instanced in S. Paul and S. Augustine.

18 The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats : and so are the stony rocks for the conies.

That is, the loftier mysteries of devout contemplation and the more difficult parts of Scripture form the favourite theme of meditation for soaring hearts, inasmuch as the literal meaning of the Hebrew name of the ibex or *wild goat* is *climber*. "Let not these animals seem vile to thee, thou seest that the flock feeds in lofty places, to wit, on a mount. Therefore, where are precipices for others, there is no peril for the goats; there is the food of this flock, there their provender is sweeter, their pasture choicer. They are seen by their herdsmen, hanging from the wooded cliff, where can be no attacks by wolves, where the fruitful trees minister abundant produce."

S. Ambros.  
Hom. 16 in  
Ps. cxix.

Prov. xxx.  
24.

S. Greg.  
Mag. Mor.  
xxx. 29.  
S. Pet.  
Damiani.  
S. Bernard.

*The conies.* These are included in the Proverbs amongst the "four things which be little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise," for though they "are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks." The *coney* or *hyrax* is a small animal externally much resembling a rabbit or a marmot, though of a totally different species, and is noted for its extreme wariness, and the rapidity with which it hurries to the shelter of a cleft or cavern on the first alarm. It is thus a fit type of all timid souls, unable for the bold climbing of stronger natures, but finding a refuge not less sure than the highest hills in devout and lowly reliance on the Wounds and Passion of CHRIST, the Rock of Ages cleft for their salvation. For *wild goats* and *conies*, the LXX. and Vulgate read *stags* and *hedgehogs*, but there is no important difference introduced thereby into the exposition, save that a few of the commentators take the latter word to denote men still rough with small daily sins, who seek refuge and purification within the Church of CHRIST. And observe, that in these two verses we have three refuges set before us: the *Tree* of the Cross, the *mount* of prayer, the *rocks* of a steadfast faith in CHRIST.

A.

P.

19 He appointed the moon for certain seasons : and the sun knoweth his going down.

One meaning of the first clause is more fully set forth in another place: "He made the moon also to serve in her season for a declaration of times, and a sign of the world; from the moon is the sign of feasts." But it may be extended to a wider significance, and embrace all the lunar phases, and the seasons of the year. S. Chrysostom understands by the *moon* here, drawing its light from the unseen sun, the Synagogue, *appointed* only for the *certain seasons*

Eccles. xliii.  
6.

Gen. i. 14.

S. Chrysost.  
in Ps. cxi.



of the Law and Prophets, but not knowing the mystery of the Passion, for only the Sun of Righteousness Himself knew of His coming Crucifixion, His awful setting in blood: saying, "FATHER, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy SON also may glorify Thee." The more usual exposition of the moon here is, however, as the Christian Church, waxing and waning, but never extinguished, but sometimes decrecent by reason of apostasy and coldness, sometimes shining at the full in the victories of the Martyrs. Only the sun is said to *know*, for the moon depends on him, and has no independent light of her own, and therefore must draw her knowledge from him, as the Church derives all her wisdom from CHRIST. And one of the things He knows, which we do not, is why He sets at times in the hearts of His people, leaving them in the darkness of their sins or of their doubt and sorrow; wherefore it follows:

20 Thou makest darkness that it may be night :  
wherein all the beasts of the forest do move.

It was *darkness*, that of sorrow, in the hearts of the Apostles at the time of the LORD's Passion, when the wild rage of the populace, truly *beasts of the forest*, was wreaked on Him. It was darkness, that of sin, then too, in the hearts of the Jews, when the evil spirits, believing themselves victorious, assumed the mastery over them; and a little later, when the fierce heathen of Rome moved their camps and forces against the guilty city for its total overthrow. Of these several glooms that darkness which lasted from the sixth to the ninth hour at the Crucifixion was a type; and so, when the like overshadows our hearts, then evil thoughts and passions, the suggestions of our ghostly enemies, move and *pass through* (Vulg.) our minds; while in the whole body of the Church, the darkness and ignorance of incompetent and slothful pastors enables heretics to devour the LORD's flock, as it is then "in darkness and the shadow of death."

21 The lions roaring after their prey : do seek  
their meat from God.

This the evil spirits did at the time of the Passion, when they saw treason and cowardice invade the very college of the Apostles; when Judas betrayed, Peter denied, and the others fled. Wherefore the LORD saith, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired you, that he may sift you as wheat." They *seek their meat from God*, because, on the one hand, as we read in the story of holy Job, they can tempt no man unless God grant them permission; and again, their object is to draw sinners from God and to themselves. Peter was dragged out of those very jaws: Judas was swal-

S. Ambros.  
S. John xvii.

A.

L.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

Arnobius.

R. Moses  
Hadarschin.  
S. Chrysost.

S. Greg. M.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
S. Luke i. 79.

Honorius.

S. Luke xxii.

A.

Honorius.



Hugo Card.  
S. Matt. xxv.  
40.

lowed up. And the words hold good of rapacious kings and governments seizing on the property of the Church and of religious houses, robbing *from God*, for "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

22 The sun ariseth, and they get them away together : and lay them down in their dens.

Arnobius.

A.

S. Hieron.  
in Gal. vi.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

When the LORD arose again in the glory of His Resurrection, the evil spirits and their tools, the chief Priests and Pharisees, were confounded and put to rout; when the Truth is boldly preached in all its clearness after a season of neglect and darkness, or of persecution, the enemies of the Gospel, Jews and heretics alike, retire to their lurking-places; when the Day-star arises in our hearts, the evil passions of the soul are lulled to rest, and hidden from the thought. Before the Resurrection, the evil spirits had greater power in the world than now, and went up and down, seeking whom they might devour; but now their power is restricted, and they are compelled to lurk in dens, and not to range openly about. When the last great arising of the Sun of Righteousness shall take place, and the LORD shall come in glory to judgment, then His enemies shall lay them down in their dens, in the everlasting prison of the bottomless pit. And because the evil spirits are fettered even now, and cannot work harm at their pleasure, we read,

23 Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour : until the evening.

Ay.

S. John ix. 4.  
Rev. ii. 10.

Job vii. 2.

Here is the result of sunrise, teaching us the contrast between man and beast. For the wild beasts hide in the daytime, to avoid capture, but roam about at night for prey, while man, endowed with reason, rests in the night and toils in the day. Every one on whom CHRIST shines is prompted to toil for Him, and that till the evening of life, to the coming on of death; and thus the Apostles, and all other great preachers since, have gone forth to the labour of extending the Gospel kingdom, to last through the persecution of Antichrist, and to the very twilight of the world. *Until* the evening, for "the night cometh when no man can work," but not ceasing until that time, for the LORD hath said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." The toil may be heavy, and the hours slow, so that man is "as a servant that earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling that looketh for the reward of his work," but takes comfort, remembering that

Skelton.

Be the day weary, or be the day long,  
At the last the bell ringeth to evensong.



24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works : in wisdom hast thou made them all ; the earth is full of thy riches.

He does not undertake to answer his own question, *How manifold?* for he confesses God's works to be greater than his own power of expression ; whether these *works* belong to the creation of nature or to that of grace. And observe how the concurrent operation of the Blessed Trinity is set forth : *O Lord, how manifold are Thy works*, teaches of the FATHER, the Source of all things ; *in Wisdom hast Thou made them all*, tells us of the SON, the Eternal WORD, "CHRIST the power of God and the Wisdom of God, by Whom were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made ;" *the earth is full of Thy riches*, is spoken of the HOLY GHOST, Who filleth the world. And they explain this last clause diversely of the Church, God's *possession* (Vulg.) which fills the earth, as it is made known in every land, or of the gifts of the sacraments, and those of faith, hope, and charity poured out on the world by the Gospel ; or again of the special land of Judæa, filled by the Apostolic preaching with saintly disciples, the true riches of the LORD.

A.

Hugo Card.

C.

1 Cor. i. 24.  
S. John i. 3.

Honorius.

25 So is the great and wide sea also : wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

*So is.* These words are not in the Hebrew, which is better translated *Yonder is the great and wide sea*, the expression of a writer living at some distance from the coast. In this recurrence to the ocean, it is no longer mentioned, as in the sixth verse, merely as a shroud and pall which hid the earth, but as itself a field of creation, teeming with living things, and as wonderful as the earth and sky. Mystically, the *great sea* is the life of the present world, *full of creeping things*, temptations and perils, both small and great, through which man must pass before he can reach the peaceful shores of his Country ; lured as he is on his voyage by the siren voices of desire, pride, and avarice. The literal Hebrew of the epithet *wide* is given by LXX. and Vulgate, *wide with hands*, that is, stretching out its arms, as it were, to east and west ; but the commentators take it as meaning *wide for hands*, that is, affording ample employment to the Saints in the conversion of the heathen.

Bellarmine.

L.

S. Bernard.

Ay.

R.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

26 There go the ships, and there is that Leviathan : whom thou hast made to take his pastime therein.

These *ships* are the preachers which carry CHRIST into the



Honorius.

hearts of men, of the local Churches which pass over the sea amidst storms and tempests, piloted by CHRIST with the wood of the Cross. And observe, that as the world is the sea, and temptations and persecutions the storms, so if the Church be the ship, the Cross is the mast, faith the sail, good works her yards, the Apostles and doctors her crew, the HOLY GHOST the favourable wind, the harbour the end of the world, and the country reached everlasting life. This is that vessel of which we read, "And when He was entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him," of which it is true that "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved."

L.

S. Matt. viii.

23.

Acts xxvii.

31.

Philip de la

Grève.

Serm. 110.

Hesychius.

Every soul that has set out on the voyage for the Happy Isles is like a ship too, whereof some make shipwreck of the faith, and never reach the haven, while others, more blessed in their undertaking, come safe to land. And in saying *there* go the ships, we are taught that the way to heaven must needs be over the waters of Baptism. *Leviathan*, translated *dragon* by LXX. and Vulgate, cannot here mean, as it elsewhere does, the fresh-water crocodile, but stands for any sea monster, *taking its pastime*, by sporting and playing freely in the waters. But the ambiguity of the Hebrew, reproduced by the Vulgate, makes another reading possible, *whom Thou hast made to sport with him*, a sense borne out by the similar language, "Wilt thou play with him [*leviathan*] as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?" And then the notion will be of the perfect ease with which God deals with the vast bulk of the monster as a mere toy in His hands. There is a wild Jewish tradition that the male *leviathan* is for three hours daily the plaything of God, while the female, slain to avert the multiplication of such huge creatures, is salted down for the food of Israel in the days of Messiah. A literalist view, taken by some of the mediæval commentators, albeit with some incredible adjuncts, sees here denoted the ease with which *leviathan*, despite his size and strength, is captured and killed by means of human skill and ingenuity pitted against brute force.

Bellarmine.

Ewald.

Job xli. 5.

Lyranus.

Ay.

D. C.

Agellius.

Petrus Ble-  
sensis in  
Job.

Mystically, they take it to mean the devil, who, in despite of his power and craft, is made a mock of by God, by men, and by Angels; by God, when suffered to tempt men that they may advance in holiness; by men, whom he often finds stronger, like Job, the more he strives to weaken them; by Angels, whom he knows to be fully aware of all the circumstances of his fall. The LXX. rendering of Job xl. 19, speaking of Behemoth, is "This is the beginning of the creation of the LORD, made to be sported with by the Angels;" whence S. Augustine, illustrating the present Psalm, remarks, "Wouldst thou mock the dragon? Be an Angel of God. But thou art not yet an Angel of God. Until thou be such, if thou do but hold the course towards it, there are Angels to mock the dragon, lest he should hurt thee. For the Angels of heaven are set over the powers of the air." And thus,



having lost his great power, he is made for a mock, so that any one who has CHRIST for his Head, can trample on the dragon, and bruise the head thereof, by refusing to yield to his suggestions, or to swerve from the right way. And so the Master Himself made a mock of the sea monster, luring him with the bait of Manhood which had the hook of Deity, and does so still by daily rescuing sinners from his grasp through means of repentance.

P.

Hugo Card.

27 These wait all upon thee : that thou mayest give them meat in due season.

28 When thou givest it them they gather it : and when thou openest thy hand they are filled with good.

The Psalmist once again turns to the contemplation of God's continual providence and care for His creation, in that He does not simply make it, and having laid down certain fixed laws for its guidance, withdraw Himself from all interference and supervision, but is its active and incessant ruler, so that all vital things live by His bounty, and would die were He to close His hand and turn His face away. All faithful souls wait upon God, that He may give them CHRIST's Body and Blood to be their food, in the due season of love and penitence ; and all persecutors, all evil spirits, and even the great dragon himself, must wait God's pleasure before they can tempt or devour any man. When temptation comes, or when destruction comes, it is only in *due season*, at the time when Divine probation or Divine displeasure wills it. They then who would fain not be the dragon's food, have to see that they be not earthy in their conversation, for it is written of the serpent, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life;" so that they whose conversation is in heaven are far above out of his reach, and are not fed upon, but feeders, for "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." And man obtains this when God discloses Himself by opening His Hand ; that is, revealing His Only-Begotten Son, by Whom, and not by any efforts of our own, we are *filled with good* ; with the graces of faith, hope, and charity, with the gifts of the Sacraments and of the SPIRIT in this life, and satiated with everlasting blessedness in the world to come ; for "every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the FATHER of lights."

Bellarmine.

L.

A.

C.

Gen. iii. 14.

Alcuin.

S. Matt. iv.

4.

A.

S. James i.

17.

29 When thou hidest thy face they are troubled : when thou takest away their breath they die, and are turned again to their dust.



- C. God turns away His face sometimes, lest men should ascribe to their own merit or holiness that good wherewith they are filled, and to teach them that His open hand is its efficient cause, so that they are *troubled*, till they pray to see once more the light of His countenance. And as He is the bestower of life, so He also takes it away, and as the withdrawal of His Spirit from any man means spiritual death, (for we read, "The Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him,") so a man thus punished is *turned again to the dust*, and becomes the prey of the creeping serpent. But the LORD also, in His mercy, after He has troubled sinners, takes away from them the spirit of pride and rebellion, so that they die to their sins, and make their confession to God in the dust of humility and repentance.

1 Sam. xvi.  
14.

A.

30 When thou lettest thy breath go forth they shall be made : and thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

The force of the former clause here is seen better in the A.V. translation, nearly identical with LXX. and Vulgate. *Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created.* That is, in the literal sense, whereas God destroys one generation of animated beings, reducing them to dust, He exercises His creative energy by calling a fresh generation into being, and thus replenishes the earth with creatures of every species. It is the same quickening and vivifying influence of which we read in the beginning of the Mosaic record, "The SPIRIT of God moved upon the face of the waters." And what He does in this wise by secondary causes, He is able to do at once by primary and immediate operation, so that the verse may be well understood of the general Resurrection, when the LORD GOD will say, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." And besides this sense, there is the further one of the continual mission of the HOLY GHOST in the Church for the conversion of sinners, and their renewal by the new birth of Baptism, the new cleansing of repentance, "For we are His workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works," wherefore, "be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." And it is rightly said *the face of the earth*, because the teaching of the Apostles, converting the Gentiles to the truth, has spread everywhere, "their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words into the ends of the world."

Bellarmino.

Gen. i. 2.

Ay.

Ezek.  
xxxvii. 9.

Eph. ii. 10;  
iv. 23.

Hesychius.  
Ps. xix. 4.

31 The glorious Majesty of the LORD shall endure for ever : the LORD shall rejoice in his works.



This ought rather to be taken, as by LXX. and Vulgate, as a prayer: *Let the glory of the Lord be for ever.* The Psalmist begins with the praise of God's glory and ends with prayer for its everlasting continuance. His first petition is also the first in the Our FATHER. Because the LORD renews the face of the earth, and creates afresh living creatures therein, because He maketh all things new, and will bring forth a new heaven and a new earth when the old have passed away, therefore His *glory shall endure for ever.* Not that it would cease to be, in its essence and eternity, were He alone in the universe, but that it can be manifested only while there is a creation to disclose, to serve, and to worship Him. And it is then said, *The Lord shall rejoice in His works,* because He delights in the life, not in the death of His creatures, "for God made not death; neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living." When the new creation is complete, it will be said, as it was once before, "God saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was very good." But whereas it afterward "repented the LORD, and grieved Him at the heart," because of the fall of man, He will have no such sorrow and dishonour in the Resurrection, for His works of mercy and of justice will be both made perfect, in destroying sin and rewarding holiness, so that the *glorious majesty of the Lord shall endure for ever,* as He is worshipped by His ransomed Saints, those works of His grace wherein He rejoices. And the FATHER, Who saved the world by the Incarnation and Passion of His Son, will look well pleased on Him, saying, "Behold Mine elect, in Whom My soul delighteth."

S. Chrysost.

Bellarmine.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

S. Chrysost.

Wisd. i. 13.

Gen. i. 31.

Gen. vi. 6.

Hugo Card.

L.

Isa. xlii. 1.

32 The earth shall tremble at the look of him : if he do but touch the hills, they shall smoke.

Amongst those works of God wherein He delights, the conversion of sinners holds a high place, and He looks upon them when they are trusting in their own strength, till they tremble, and even the proud amongst them send up the smoking incense of confession and prayer from the height of their imagination to the footstool of His throne. The immediate reference is to the trembling and darkness on Sinai at the giving of the Law, and some commentators see therein and here a type and prophecy of the earthquake which shall precede the Judgment, and the fire, out of which the elect shall be saved, to which the smoke will be due.

S. Prosper.

A.

Exod. xix.  
16.

Pseudo-

Hieron.

B.

33 I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live : I will praise my God while I have my being.

34 And so shall my words please him : my joy shall be in the LORD.



A. *I will sing*, denotes our due service of praise and worship during all this mortal life, as long, too, as we truly live by the SPIRIT of GOD; *I will praise* implies action, as the word signifies playing on an instrument, and tells us of the other service of good works, never to cease for the redeemed in this life, nor, perhaps, in that which is to come.

Ay. Others, however, comparing that voice of the Prophet, "Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered;" explain the words here as denoting the mournful song of confession of sin. That song may be sung, observes the Carmelite, in bass, in tenor, in alto, as we pass from contrition to confession and thence to mortification. There are four chief faults in singing, remarks the Cardinal of S. Sabina; slurring over the notes, singing false, being flat, and being in discord; and we may commit all these in confession, by being silent about some of our sins, misrepresenting others, making excuses to palliate them, or not being penitent at heart.

Ay. *So shall my words please Him*. More exactly, with LXX. and Vulgate, *be sweet unto Him*, for though confession is bitter to man, who offers it, yet it is sweet to GOD Who receives it. But, as a devout writer observes, "all is washed away in confession, the conscience is purified, bitterness is taken away, the waves are driven back, the calm returns, hope revives, and the soul becometh cheerful," wherefore is added here: *My joy shall be in the Lord*, when all pleasure in worldly delights has passed for ever from the soul.

S. Bernard.  
Rhythm.  
Jubilus.

JESU, Thou joy of loving hearts,  
Thou fount of life, Thou light of men,  
From the best bliss that earth imparts,  
We turn unfilled to Thee again.

35 As for sinners, they shall be consumed out of the earth, and the ungodly shall come to an end: praise thou the LORD, O my soul, praise the LORD.

L. The LXX. and Vulgate read this verse as a prayer, agreeing therein with the A.V. There is but one jarring note in the harmonious Psalm of creation, it is only man of all living things that can make GOD sad, and draw tears from the eyes of CHRIST.

Keble,  
Christian  
Year.

All true, all faultless, all in tune,  
Creation's wondrous choir,  
Opened in mystic unison  
To last till time expire.

And still it lasts: by day and night,  
With one consenting voice,  
All hymn Thy glory, LORD, aright,  
All worship and rejoice.



Man only mars the sweet accord,  
O'erpowering with harsh din  
The music of Thy works and word,  
Ill matched with grief and sin.

And therefore the Psalmist prays that this discord may be amended; and that in one of two ways, either by the conversion of sinners, that burnt up with the fire of the HOLY GHOST, they may have no earthliness left remaining in them, but that all their ungodliness may come to end; or, if they harden themselves against the mercy of the LORD, they may be entirely taken away, that they be no longer a stumbling-block in the way of the elect.

A.

D. C.

*Praise the Lord, O my soul.* A dignified ending of the Psalm, as the like beginning of it is dignified, for we should ever be praising Him Who never ceaseth to bestow His bounties upon us. He is Alpha, and our life should begin with His praise: He is Omega, and it should close in like manner, for "the soul of blessing shall be made fat" with all the riches of God's house, when He shall have put away evil for evermore. And therefore, with deep significance, we have here as the final words of the Psalm, and for the first time in the Psalter, the cry of HALLELUJAH, *Praise ye the Lord*, celebrating His victory over sin, His judgments on the wicked; just as its first occurrence in the New Testament is in the vision of S. John, "I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the LORD our God: for true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia."

C.

Hugo Card.  
Prov. xi. 25,  
marg.

Talmud.

Rev. xix. 1.

Wherefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is clothed with majesty and honour; glory be to the SON, the Eternal Wisdom in Whom He hath made all things; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Author of the new creation, Who reneweth the face of the earth.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

## COLLECTS.

O glorious and Almighty God, Who hast satisfied the dry land with abundant fruit, grant us to contemplate with spiritual understanding Thy glorious Ascension, that while we look up to Thee in heaven, we may ever meditate on heavenly things. (5.)

Ludolph.

How magnified are Thy works, O LORD, in wisdom hast Thou made them all; but fill us with the Spirit of guidance,

Mozarabic.

III.

Q



that whilst we wonder at Thy works, our understanding may praise and magnify Thee in Thy works. (11.)

**Mozarabic.** O LORD GOD Almighty, Who hast commanded the evening, and the morning, and the noontide to be called one day, and hast bidden the sun to know his going down; pierce, we beseech Thee, the darkness of our hearts, that as Thou sheddest Thy rays, we may acknowledge Thee to be Very God and Light everlasting. (11.)

**Mozarabic.** O LORD GOD Almighty, Who makest Thine Angels spirits and Thy ministers a flame of fire, kindle in us, we beseech Thee, the flame of Thy love, which, by the word of the sacred mouth, Thou hast vouchsafed Thy promise to send, and let it glow in such wise within us by faith and works, that it may cut away all sins from us, and unite us with the heavenly citizens. (11.)

**D. C.** O GOD, Who lookest upon the earth, and makest it to tremble, send Thy wholesome fear into our hearts, that, abandoning the evil things whereby we have grievously offended Thee, our sinful face may be renewed by Thy Spirit within us, and we may ever cling to Thee in holy devotion, and sing to Thy praise in the pleasantness of salvation. (1.)

## PSALM CV.

**TITLE.** LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

### ARGUMENT.

**ARG. THOMAS.** That CHRIST, the LORD GOD over all the earth, pronounces His judgments. The Voice to the Apostles concerning the Jews. The Voice of CHRIST to the Apostles concerning the Jews, and first, in the Confession of the Saints. The Voice of CHRIST to the Apostles concerning His praise and confession of sins.

**VEN. BEDE.** *Alleluia* is a Hebrew word, which is interpreted *Praise ye the Lord*: and whenever it is placed in the titles, it teaches that the power of the Creator ought always to be *praised*. We say this once for all, and this is to be noted in all cases. In whatsoever Psalm *Alleluia* is marked first, it has *Alleluia* at the close also: which, many persons not knowing, think it to be the beginning of the succeeding Psalm. Further, you will often find two *Alleluias* prefixed in one Psalm, which means that one belongs to the end of the preceding, the other to the beginning of the following one.

The Prophet, knowing that the people of Israel were accustomed to rest their hope in temporal blessings, warns the faithful in the first part, that they should ever seek it out spiritually. *O give thanks unto*



*the Lord, and call upon His Name.* Secondly, he encourages them by the examples of the Patriarchs, for they were not forsaken by the LORD, because they obeyed His rule. *Remember the marvellous works that He hath done.* Thirdly, he details the great things He did for their fathers, and how He preserved Joseph and bestowed honours upon him; and commemorates the entrance of the Hebrews into Egypt. *When there were yet but a few of them.* Fourthly, he tells how Israel was avenged of his enemies, by the divers plagues of the Egyptians: *Whose heart turned so.* Fifthly, he describes what great things He did for them in the wilderness; that they should not rejoice in temporal good things, but softened by His bounties, keep His statutes and law. *He brought them forth with silver and gold.*

**SYRIAC PSALTER.** Anonymous. He discourses concerning the history, Fear not, Jacob, to go down into Egypt. At the same time he spiritually teaches us not to be afraid when any one goes forth to contend against evil spirits, for GOD is our help, and fights for us.

**EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA.** An instruction to the Gentiles concerning GOD's bounties to the former people.

**S. ATHANASIUS.** A Psalm of thanksgiving, describing a life endowed with excellent virtues.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* Saturday: Matins.

*Ambrosian.* Friday of Second Week: II. Nocturn.

*Parisian.* Monday: Matins.

*Lyons.* Friday: Nones.

*Quignon.* Monday: Matins.

#### ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* As preceding Psalm.

*Monastic and Ambrosian.* Let the heart of them rejoice \* that seek the LORD.

*Parisian.* Remember \* the marvellous works that He hath done; His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth.

*Mozarabic.* First portion: Seek the LORD, and be strong; seek His face evermore. Second portion: He opened the rock of stone, and the waters flowed out: so that rivers ran in the dry places.

This Psalm is counted by the LXX. and Vulgate (which transfer the closing Alleluia of the previous one to the title of this) as the first of the Alleluiatic Psalms, the others of which are in the Hebrew text, 106, 111, 112, 113, 115, 116, 117, 135, 146, 147, 148, 149, and 150; to which the LXX. and Vulgate add, 107, 116, v. 10, 118, 119, 136, and 147, v. 12. There is a tradition, preserved by the Pseudo-Epiphanius, that the custom of chanting the Alleluia at the beginning or end of a Psalm was introduced into the ritual of the Second Temple by the Prophet Haggai; and its adoption into the services of the Christian Church in its untranslated form is due to the Hebraistic tone of the Apocalypse. The present Psalm is an augmented edition of one composed by David on the occasion of bringing up the Ark into Jerusalem, as set down in

Pseudo-  
Epiphanius.  
de  
Vit. Pro-  
phet.  
Genebrar-  
dus.



1 Chron. xvi. 8—22, which coincides almost word for word with the first fifteen verses of this one; the latter part of which is partly new, and partly a cento made up from other Psalms, notably lxxviii., which seems to have been produced somewhat earlier. It is by no means improbable that the reference to Joseph in the Psalm may glance at the analogous position of Nehemiah under Artaxerxes, and urge present obedience to the Persian rule in the hope of a new deliverance like that under Moses. And it is noteworthy that from the first emigration under Zerubbabel, encouraged by Cyrus, until the full establishment of the priestly kingdom of the Maccabees (the nearest reproduction of the original Mosaic polity in the history of Israel) is nearly four hundred years, a period sufficiently close to that of the sojourn in Egypt to bring out the analogy with much exactness.

1 Chron.  
xvi.

R. Kimch.

Tamid. vii.

4.

Middoth ii.

5.

Dehltzsch.

In the account of the festival of the translation of the Ark, already referred to, the part of this Psalm which occurs is followed, without any break, by the first edition of Psalm xvi., and there is a Jewish tradition that the two were sung daily before the Ark, this one in the morning, and Psalm xvi. in the evening, until the dedication of Solomon's Temple. At a later time Ps. cv. was in use on the first day of the feast of Tabernacles. Besides its classification amongst the Alleluiatics, it is also marked as the first of the *Hodeu*, or "O give thanks" Psalms, of which the remainder are cvii., cxviii., and cxxxvi.

1 O give thanks unto the LORD, and call upon his Name : tell the people what things he hath done.

2 O let your songs be of him and praise him : and let your talking be of all his wondrous works.

S. Bona-  
ventura.

There are three ways in which man should open his mouth in the honour of God; first, in the utterance of His praise, *O give thanks*; secondly, in the accusation of self, *call upon His Name*; thirdly, in the edification of one's neighbour, *tell the people*. And the various grades of such homage are here set down; for we may *give thanks* secretly in spirit, without voice, but *call upon His Name* adds utterance, *songs* implies cheerfulness, *praise* (or rather *play instruments*, LXX., Vulg.) active works, *talking of all His wonders* teaches us that our laud is to begin with the very outset of creation, and to continue for all time. Yet it is clear that we cannot talk of *all* His wondrous works, for they surpass human knowledge and utterance. But the words teach us that we should not hold back or be silent about any of them which we do know. Thus, fear was unable to impose silence on Peter and John, when they said, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard;" shame could not stop Paul, who exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST;" and warned his convert Timothy, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our LORD, nor of me His prisoner." And

C.

Hugo Card.  
Acts iv. 20.

Galat. vi. 14.

2 Tim. i. 8.



whereas there are many wondrous works of the LORD JESUS, yet three stand out pre-eminently, in that He made God to be man, a Virgin to be a Mother, the heart to be faithful. And accordingly, on the morning of the Nativity the Church cries aloud, "O sing unto the LORD a new song, for He hath done marvellous things." And the music in God's honour, they tell us, is made in three ways, with harp, flute, and voice, signifying action of the hand, breathing out the soul in devout prayer, uttering articulate praise, and that with a range of seven notes, beginning in the low tone of perfect submission, and then, in ascending concord, humility of heart, mortification of the flesh, compassion, consolation, prayer, and devotion.

Ps. xcviil. 1.  
Hugo Vict.  
Ay.

3 Rejoice in his holy Name : let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.

4 Seek the LORD and his strength : seek his face evermore.

It is, observes an ancient writer, that first true joyous Alleluia which burst forth on the Day of Pentecost, when the inspired Apostles told the people what things their LORD had done, and counselled them, especially those who come from heathen countries, saying, "Seek not to be praised for the power of your kings, or for the might of your wars, but laying aside 'the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle,' take unto you peace, and unite unto your name CHRIST, Whom we preach unto you, that ye, who are now called Gentiles, may be called Christians, and *be praised in His holy Name* (Vulg.,) and your heart may rejoice because ye have sought and found the LORD." So the Apostles themselves, after their imprisonment and scourging, "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name." The term *seek the Lord* implies something more than acknowledging Him as the true GOD, to wit, such a confession of Him as to induce the worshipper to obey the Mosaic rule, and make a pilgrimage to the sacred place where stood the Ark, where alone the sacrificial rites of the Aaronic priesthood could be performed, and where only in consequence, the *strength* and the *face* of the LORD could be known upon earth. To us, therefore, the words are an exhortation to seek CHRIST Himself, the Presence of God, in Whom alone we can be made strong, and even when we have found Him, to go on seeking Him for *evermore*, as in His infinity there is always fresh matter for love, wonder and devotion, and we can never exhaust His perfections. He is to be sought without end, because He is to be loved without end, and even when He is known to be present, He is to be longed after with perpetual affection, lest He should absent Himself.

Arnobius.

Ps. lxxvi. 4.

L.

Acts v. 41.

Rosenmüller.

R. Kimchl.  
Abulensis.

A.  
S. Chrysost.  
Z.



- We may seek Him in many ways, but especially in meditation, prayer, Scripture reading, and those good works whereby we imitate His life on earth. "In simplicity of heart seek Him," the Wise Man counsels, for there is a seeking which is not good, as of Herod when he sought to slay Him, of Judas and the soldiers when they sought to lay hold of Him, but "He will be found of them that tempt Him not, and sheweth Himself unto such as do not distrust Him." Wherefore "seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near;" for His own promise to us is, "Seek, and ye shall find," as the shepherds found Him in the manger, His Mother in the Temple, the dying thief upon the Cross, Mary Magdalene in the garden, the disciples on the way to Emmaus. And observe, too, that it is said, Seek His *Face*; whereas He showed Moses only His back parts; in token that we are to look not to His mere temporal gifts, but to the glories which are beyond. So, if we do not wish to meet His rebuke, "Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled," we must say with the Apostle, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark of the high calling of God in CHRIST JESUS." And then, whosoever once possesses GOD, cannot be tortured by fear, nor deceived by treachery, nor suffer want, nor can fail in fulness of love, for GOD will never forsake one that loves Him, nor suffer a stronger to overcome him. And observe that the word *seek* is thrice used here, for under the Law the Jews were obliged to present themselves thrice a year before the LORD, at the Passover, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles. And we too should seek the face of the Ever-blessed Trinity, the SON in His own new Paschal oblation, the HOLY GHOST in the fires of Pentecost, the FATHER when we enter into our Country, and bear the palm-branches there in token of victory and rest, of a conquered world, and an eternal inheritance. To the first seeking *rejoicing* is linked, to the second *strength*, to the third perseverance *for evermore*, and thus the state of beginners, advancers, and those made perfect in grace is shadowed forth, and we may well pray for continuance to the end in the way of salvation, taking as our own the words of one of the greatest of penitent Saints: "O LORD my GOD, my one Hope, hearken unto me, lest I should be too weary to seek Thee, but let me seek Thy face with fervour evermore. Thou, Who hast made Thyself capable of being found, and hast more and more bestowed the hope of finding Thee, give me strength to seek Thee." Faith has already found Him, but Hope seeks Him still, and Love, which found Him by faith, desires to behold Him in open vision. "And I think," comments S. Bernard, "that there will be no end of that seeking Him when He is found. For GOD is not sought with footsteps, but with longings,
- Honorius.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Wisd. i. 1, 2.
- Isa. lv. 6.
- S. Luke i. 9.
- Hugo Card.
- S. John vi.  
26.
- Philipp. iii.  
13.
- S. Anselm.  
Cantuar.
- The Gloss.
- L.
- Philip de la  
Grève.
- S. August.  
de Trinitate,  
15.
- A.
- Serm. in  
Cant. 84.



And that happy finding does not crush holy longing, but increases it. For surely the consummation of joy is not the consummation of longing." And therefore Divine Wisdom saith, "They that eat Me shall yet be hungry, and they that drink Me shall yet be thirsty." Ecclesi. xiv. 21.

5 Remember the marvellous works that he hath done : his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth,

6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant : ye children of Jacob his chosen.

The Psalmist trains the babes in faith by recalling to their mind the mighty things done for the patriarchs their forefathers ; and as their unaccustomed eyes could no more look on the Face of God than on the sun in full orb, he bids them look at those great acts which shadow forth the Lord's power and goodness. By *wonders*, they understand the miracles wrought on behalf of the children of Israel, and by *judgments of His mouth* the plagues sent upon the Egyptians ; or else the precepts of the Law, so that the power of God is set forth by the former term, and His wisdom by the latter. Under the covenant of grace the words are addressed to the Apostles, the true spiritual *seed of Abraham*, the friend of God, for the God-Man said unto them, "Ye are My friends," the true *children of Jacob*, a more glorious *chosen* twelve,<sup>1</sup> who were to bear in mind the *wonders* of His Incarnation, Resurrection, and Ascension, and to preach the *judgments of His mouth*, as delivered in the Gospels, to all nations of the world. The words are spoken to us also, children of Abraham in faith, and as the Apostle teaches us, by the examples of Ishmael and Esau, that this is not enough, children of *Jacob* also, the wrestler against sin, who prevailed with God, and won the name of Israel ; for it is not enough to be children of Abraham by faith, unless we be also children of Jacob by works. And those of us who are such, may well bear in mind CHRIST's marvels of justifying grace, His wonders in raising dead souls to life, the judgments of His mouth in teaching us how mercifully He will judge repentant sinners, saying, "Neither do I condemn thee ; go, and sin no more." And in a special sense we may understand the seed of Abraham, who left his country and kindred at the call of God, and the children of Jacob, who served obediently in a strange land for a long delayed reward, to represent the votaries of the Religious Life, whose peculiar task is constant meditation on the wonderful works of God.

A.

Bellarmine.

Theodoret.

Arnobius.

S. Chrysost.

S. John xv.

14.

S. Albertus

Magnus.

Rom. ix.

Hugo Card.

S. John viii.

11.

<sup>1</sup> The word *chosen* does not refer, as it seems to do, to Abraham and Jacob, but is an epithet of the people addressed by the Psalmist, *Ye, His chosen*. Cf. 1 Chron. xvi. 13.



7 He is the LORD our God : his judgments are in all the world.

- C. He, Whom the Jews rejected and crucified, Whom they counted a mere man, is the LORD our God, and His *judgments*, no longer taught to the Hebrew race alone, no longer confined within the narrow limits of Judæa, *are in all the world*, because that Catholic Church which He has founded has spread amongst all nations. And yet this very fact has its terrors for us. His judgments, in the matter of punishment, were more frequent and heavy amongst the Jews than upon the Gentiles, because the latter were never chastised for breaches of the positive and ceremonial law, of which they were ignorant ; but we, who have been taught the Gospel, are liable to be beaten with many stripes if we disregard it.
- Arnobius.
- A.
- Toetatus.

8 He hath been alway mindful of his covenant and promise : that he made to a thousand generations ;

9 Even the covenant that he made with Abraham : and the oath that he sware unto Isaac ;

10 And appointed the same unto Jacob for a law : and to Israel for an everlasting testament ;

- Agellius. The actual history of the Israelites, who did not enter on the possession of the land of Canaan till the fourth generation from the time of Jacob, and were deprived of it, after a comparatively brief enjoyment, for a season ; and then, after a second trial, permanently exiled, teaches us that we must look for a more enduring covenant, a more precious and divine blessing, as signified here, *made to a thousand generations*, the number denoting multitude of offspring and fulness of time. That promise is the WORD (Heb. LXX. Vulg.), Whose throne is for ever, and ever ; made known unto *Jacob*, the struggling Hebrew people, only under the types and shadows of the *Law*, but to *Israel*, the name not of birth but of blessing, belonging to the Christian faithful, in the *everlasting testament* of the Gospel dispensation. And observe how fittingly CHRIST is revealed to these especial Patriarchs, of whom the first is a type of lowly obedience, the second of patience, the third of endurance of toil, all which qualities we find in the highest degree united in their mighty descendant.
- Cocceius.
- S. Greg. M. Mor. ix. 3.
- Honorius.
- L.
- Ay.
- Honorius.
- Exod. iii. 6.
- S. Matt. viii. 11.
- These Patriarchs are twice divinely singled out as representatives of all believers and Saints, once in the Old Testament, and again in the New. God spake to Moses, saying, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." CHRIST said to His disciples, "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."



And that because the first is a type of faith; the second, so unexpectedly bestowed on his aged parents, of hope; the third, who toiled so long and faithfully for Rachel, of charity. Moreover, God, in declaring Himself the God of these three, has revealed Himself as Trinity in Unity, which the several names indicate: Abraham, "father of nations," telling us of the First Person; Isaac, "laughter," of the Second, the Joy of the whole earth; Israel, "prince with God," of the Third, that Princely Spirit, Who is with God and is God.

11 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan : the lot of your inheritance ;

Unto thee, for the promise was separately renewed to each of the three Patriarchs, and as the *land of Canaan* is a type of the heavenly country, so this word *thee* teaches us that the free gift is not merely a corporate one, but is proffered by God to each individual separately, inasmuch as each of us enters separately into covenant with Him in Baptism, and is promised such full and perfect possession that it can be truly spoken of by each Christian as though bestowed on him only as its sole possessor, while the notion of fellowship therein is recalled by the latter phrase *your inheritance*. And so S. Peter Damiani, singing of the joys of Paradise :

L.  
Gen. xii. 7;  
xxvi. 3;  
xxviii. 13.

And though each for divers merits there hath won a various throne ; The Rhythm  
Yet their love for one another maketh what each loves his own, *Ad personis.*  
Every prize to all is common, yet belongs to each alone.

For *lot*, the Hebrew, followed by LXX. and Vulgate, has *cord*, i.e. the measuring line with which boundaries are marked out. But one commentator tells us that it is a type of the tightly entwined sorrows of this world, which the Lord untwisted on the Cross. And note that *Canaan* means "low-land," a significant name, meaning that heaven is intended only for the lowly and humble of heart.

C.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.

12 When there were yet but a few of them : and they strangers in the land ;

They were but three, when the promise was first given, with no settled habitation ; they were, even under the leadership of Joshua, but a handful against the seven nations whom they overcame and drove out ; well acquainted as these must have been with all the mountain passes and strongholds, whence advantage could be taken of the invader. And in like manner the scanty band of the Apostles, unlearned and ignorant men, driven out from Judæa, the country of their birth, and *strangers in the land* of the Gentiles, preached the Word in defiance of prisons, scourges, torture, and death, so that their

L.  
Ay.



martyrdoms did but increase the number of the faithful and bring the world into subjection to the Cross. And more wonderful than either is the manner in which God has chosen His little flock of the elect out of the world, and bestowed on them an eternal inheritance, and that when each one of us is, as it were, attended by very few companions, slenderly equipped with virtues and good works, and clinging to but a few great truths.

Bern.  
Cluniac.  
Rhythmus.

That we should look, poor wanderers,  
To have our home on high,  
That worms should seek for dwellings  
Beyond the starry sky!  
To all one happy guerdon,  
Of one celestial grace;  
For all, for all, who mourn their fall,  
Is one eternal place.

13 What time as they went from one nation to another : from one kingdom to another people ;

14 He suffered no man to do them wrong : but reproved even kings for their sakes ;

A.

The literal sense refers to the journeyings of Abraham and Isaac in Gerar and in Egypt, to Jacob's wanderings in Padan-Aram, Edom, and Egypt also, and the manner in which Abimelech of Gerar and Pharaoh of Egypt were restrained from doing any wrong to them, while Abraham's defeat of the confederate kings, and Jacob's ultimate triumph over the artifices of Laban are also suggested to the memory. Mystically, the words teach us of the pilgrimage of the Saints towards the Land of promise, when, in the process of conversion and sanctification, they pass from the "sinful nation, a nation laden with iniquity," from the *kingdom* of the evil one, to *another people*, that "blessed people whose God is the LORD," "an holy nation, a peculiar people." And these God preserves, so that no efforts of the ungodly to root them out by persecution can avail, nor can even torture and death really harm such as have the doors of heaven thereby opened to them, since their enemies, who slew the body, have no power at all against the soul. *He reproved even kings for their sakes*, as when He smote Herod with worms ; when, as Lactantius tells us, Nero was slain and left unburied ; Decius defeated and killed in battle ; Valerian made captive, mocked, and flayed alive ; Aurelian murdered by his own domestics ; Diocletian mad ; Maximian strangled ; Maximin Daia poisoned ; Maxentius drowned in flying from the rout of his army ; Licinius stripped of the purple by Constantine and put to death ; without counting up the similar histories of succeeding ages.

Tostatus.  
Gen. xv. 7.  
Rupert.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
Hugo Card.

Isa. i. 4.

Ps. xxxiii.  
12.  
1 S. Pet. ii.  
9.

De mortibus  
persecut.



15 Touch not mine Anointed : and do my prophets no harm.

There is greater emphasis given to the first clause here by the Vulgate, which merely transliterates the LXX. and reads *My Christs*. As no literal anointing, either in the capacity of kings or of priests, was conferred on the three Patriarchs named, it is conceded on all hands that the word is used of them here in a spiritual sense only; either in their character of Prophets, or as being, by anticipation and vision, Christians, and thus having "an unction from the Holy One," and being made kings and priests unto Him, Whose day they saw, and were glad. The prohibition did not cease with the lives of these three, but extends through all time to the Christs of the Lord, all Christians, and especially priests and religious, vowed to Him by especial consecration. *And do My prophets no harm.* The title of Prophet is given to Abraham in the only passage which seems to embody the substance of this verse (which, as S. Augustine observes, is nowhere else written down in express terms, and must thus have been spoken secretly): "Now, therefore, restore the man his wife, for he is a prophet." Isaac's gift of prophecy appears in his blessings of Jacob and Esau; Jacob's in his benediction of Ephraim and Manasseh, and his dying charge to his twelve sons. They warn us that it is possible to break this commandment of the Lord even now, by wresting and misinterpreting, like Jews and heretics, the prophecies of Holy Writ.

Apollinaris.  
Bellarmine.  
Hesychius.  
Theodoret.

1 S. John ii.  
30.  
S. John viii.  
56.

Hugo Card.

A.

Gen. xx. 7;  
xxviii. 27, 39;  
xlviii. 19;  
xlix.

Hugo Card.

16 Moreover, he called for a dearth upon the land : and destroyed all the provision of bread;

He *called* for dearth, as though it were a person, a servant waiting His bidding, for He "callethe those things which be not as though they were," albeit it may possibly imply an Angel of famine, like the Angel of pestilence of whom we read in Scripture; but in any case the word teaches us that all things which happen do so by the will and commandment of God, and not by hazard. And it is well for us to remember that He does not always summon an agent of punishment, for He says Himself in another place, "I will call for the corn and increase it, and will lay no famine upon you." *All the provision of bread.* More literally, as S. Jerome and A. V., *the whole staff of bread*, implying all the support and strength given to man by food, a notion sufficiently marked by the LXX. *στήριγμα* and the Vulgate *firmamentum*. It is here implied that the immediate object of this dearth was to bring about the migration of the Hebrews into Egypt, as a similar cause had previously influenced Abraham and Isaac. And note that in Holy Writ there are three kinds of famine mentioned; dearth of bodily food, dearth of the divine Word,

A.  
Rom. iv. 17.

Bellarmino.  
Agellius.  
Ezek. xxxvi.  
29.

A.

Ay.



dearth in the pains of hell. God sometimes sends the first that men may, in their want, return to Him, as the prodigal son, when pressed by hunger, returned to his father, whom he had left when he had enough. So too, in the particular famine here mentioned, God brought Joseph's brethren to see the crime they had committed in selling him. The second kind of dearth, is an eager desire of hearing God's Word, or a lack of the preaching thereof. Whence Amos saith: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD." Such a hunger was spread amongst all nations just before the Advent of the SAVIOUR, and the *staff of bread*, such support as Gentile philosophy had been able to give its wisest teachers and disciples, had broken down utterly before that great craving, and was confessed as a failure; until the Apostles came to give them the Living Bread, that they might not be left to the continued famine of the Word from which the Jews now suffer, nor yet undergo the last and worst of the three dearths, that everlasting hunger for a denied heaven and a withdrawn God, yea, even for annihilation itself, which they may not have who have once gone where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Amos viii.  
11.

Honorius.

Ay.

17 But he had sent a man before them : even Joseph, who was sold to be a bond-servant ;

L.  
Gen. xlv. 8,  
8 ; 1. 20

C.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Honorius.

Phil. ii. 7.

The Psalmist does but repeat Joseph's own statement, made thrice and again with emphasis to his brethren, that his going down into Egypt was divinely fore-ordained for their preservation. There is a special force in calling him a *man*, on account of the vigour, uprightness, and probity of his character; wherein he was, however faintly, a true type of CHRIST, the Man, Who was sent before His Apostles, Who took upon Him the form of a slave, and was sold, by one of His own brethren, into the hands of the heathen.

18 Whose feet they hurt in the stocks : the iron entered into his soul ;

Targum.

L.

We have here a severer picture of Joseph's sufferings in prison than that given in the Book of Genesis, probably embodying an early tradition, and certainly probable enough in itself. The now familiar and proverbial phrase, *the iron entered into his soul*, comes directly from the Chaldee and Vulgate, but is not the literal rendering, as it involves the collocation of a masculine noun with a feminine verb. The true sense is given by LXX. and A. V. margin, *His soul came into iron*. Again, it is spoken in type of CHRIST, bound with cords on the night of the betrayal, pierced in hands and feet with the nails of the Cross, transfixed at length with the



spear of the soldier ; and seeing too the sword of grief pierce the heart of that Mother who was to Him as His own soul.

19 Until the time came that his cause was known : the word of the LORD tried him.

*His cause was known.* It ought to run, as in A. V. and S. Chrysost. all the old renderings, *his word came*, that is, until his predictions to the chief butler and chief baker were fulfilled, Agellius. which appears to have been about twelve years. Till then, De Wette. the *Word of the Lord tried him*, that is, most probably, those Genebrardus. old dreams of promised exaltation, which had excited his brethren's wrath, and which were perhaps renewed in his prison, sustained his faith and tested his endurance till his release. The LXX. and Vulgate, however, instead of *tried* L. read *inflamed*. And this may be explained either of his being inspired with the power of prophecy, or again, kindled into such fervent prayer as to obtain his deliverance from God. But the Greek Fathers take it of the righteous indignation with which he was fired at the criminal proposal of his master's wife. Yet a better sense brings us back to the true meaning, by understanding *inflamed* to mean *purged with fire*, De Muis. as gold cleansed of its dross in a furnace. And of the LORD Jesus the verse holds good, in that He patiently bore His servile condition and humiliation, until all the words of prophecy touching Him had fully come to pass, and His obedience to His FATHER's will had been tested by the final and uttermost proof of death. L.

20 The king sent, and delivered him : the prince of the people let him go free.

21 He made him lord also of his house : and ruler of all his substance ;

22 That he might inform his princes after his will : and teach his senators wisdom.

Instead of the stocks in which they had made fast his feet, he received a golden chain ; instead of the garment which he left in the hand of the adulteress when he fled out stripped, he was clad by the judgment of God in vestures of fine linen ; instead of his name of slave, he wears the royal ring, and in place of his lowly dungeon, sits upon the proud chariot of the kingdom. As victor and conqueror, he perseveres amidst this exalted honour and glory in his moderation and lowliness of mind. Thus is he a fitting type of CHRIST, whom the FATHER, King of kings, and Ruler of the peoples of the Heavenly Country, delivered in the Resurrection, what time He sent the Angel to roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and when raising Him Who was made for a time lower than the Angels, to His right hand in power at the Ascension, He Rupert. Honorius. Ps. viii. s.



Phil. ii. 9.  
P. crowned Him with glory and honour, and set Him over the works of His hands, highly exalting Him and giving Him a Name which is above every name; and bestowed on Him gifts for men, by sending down the HOLY GHOST at Pentecost, to teach and *bind* (A.V.) His *princes*, the Apostles, after His will (nay, as Vulgate and LXX. will have it, as *Himself*), to impart to the Senators of His kingdom that Divine and spiritual wisdom which is the peculiar inheritance of the Saints of God.

23 Israel also came into Egypt : and Jacob was a stranger in the land of Ham.

P. It is noteworthy that only during the time of Joseph's sojourn in Egypt does that country appear as a type of good and spiritual things, but ever after it stands forth in Holy Writ as implying pride, darkness, and tyranny. If we are to see the two senses here, then Egypt, as the storehouse of plenty in the midst of a famishing world, will denote the full understanding of Holy Scripture, into which the Apostles, the true *Israel*, princes with God, Jacobs who wrestled with Him in prayer, and against the powers of evil, entered through their Master's teaching. And in the worse acceptation, the name will denote all Gentile heathendom, into which they went down as teachers, to reap the great harvest of souls, when they found that tares and weeds had well-nigh extirpated the wheat in the plains of Judæa, going as *strangers* and pilgrims, sent as they were "to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language."

Honorius.  
Ezek. iii. 6.

24 And he increased his people exceedingly : and made them stronger than their enemies ;

Le Blanc. The seventy-five that went down into Egypt so increased that in their coming forth, the able-bodied men, capable of bearing arms (usually counted at a fifth of a population) amounted to six hundred thousand ; and in like manner the little band of disciples, which cannot have greatly exceeded five hundred at the Ascension, was augmented by three thousand souls on the day of Pentecost alone, and gradually spread to the vast numbers which now fill all the fairest regions amongst the most civilized nations of the earth, so that now the extent of territory throughout the world where Christians bear rule is enormously larger than that still under Pagan or Mohammedan dominion. Europe, America, both North and South, Australia, and the vast tracts of Asia under the sway of Russia and England, together with the great state pushing its frontiers ever inland from the south of Africa, acknowledge the supremacy of the Cross, leaving little save Persia, Tartary, China, Japan, and the Negro regions of Africa unsubdued ;

1 Cor. xv. 6.



while even there the Crucified is adored by unknown and increasing numbers of worshippers. So the Martyrs proved *stronger than their enemies*, who sought to slay them and to extirpate their faith by so doing, whereas they did but publish it more widely abroad. Honorius.

25 Whose heart turned so, that they hated his people : and dealt untruly with his servants.

*Whose heart turned so.* This is the reading of the Chaldee and Arabic, but LXX., Vulgate and A.V., rightly follow the Hebrew text, and translate *He turned their heart*, not, as has been well said, by making them evil, but by lavishing blessings on the Hebrews which excited envious feelings, which were not then first produced, but merely showed themselves after having been latent for want of a cause. Rupert A. not inaptly compares the operation of God on such minds to the effect of the rays of the sun, which while bestowing life and health throughout the world, merely harden mud. *And dealt untruly with His servants.* This points to the latter part of the plot against the Israelites, when open violence had become impracticable, and the policy of wearing them out by excessive toil and imposts was adopted. Its parallel in the history of the Church, *hated* by the world, the flesh, and the devil, is the effort of Julian the Apostate, after the failure of the ten great persecutions, to overthrow the Church by the aid of heathen philosophers and of heretical teachers, put on terms of rivalry with the Catholic priesthood ; thus carrying out the policy of the Chief Priests, who on finding that the LORD Whom they had murdered was alive again, set on foot the tale that His disciples had stolen Him away while the soldiers at the sepulchre slept. Rupert. in Exod. Hugo Card. Honorius.

26 Then sent he Moses his servant : and Aaron whom he had chosen.

27 And these showed his tokens among them : and his wonders in the land of Ham.

Moses, as the *servant* of God, here typifies the law of secular government and the active life, Aaron, the *elected* one, who took not the honour upon himself, but was called of God, denotes the priesthood, and the contemplative life, here united in the one task of showing forth the works of God. *His tokens.* More exactly, as LXX., Vulg., and A.V. margin, the *words of His signs*. That is, as some will have it, they first foretold the miracles they intended to work, and then wrought them ; or again, they spoke with authority because of the signs which accompanied them, or yet again, the works which they wrought spoke for themselves. *We* Pseudo-Hieron. Hugo Card. Ric. Hamp. Heb. v. 4. are not inaptly reminded that there is probably a stress on L.



the word *His*, as denoting that the miracles were not the result of that Egyptian magic in which Moses was learned. Mystically, the whole phrase denotes the preaching of the lawgivers and priests whom CHRIST has sent with His commission into the world, whose very words are *signs and wonders*, because of the holiness which they display, the mysteries they disclose, and the loftiness of their precepts as to humility, patience, self-denial, love of enemies, and the like; while actual miracles attended, as we know, the first preaching of the Faith, and S. Gregory the Great has taught us that the moral wonders worked daily, as a matter of course, in the conversion and sanctification of sinners, belong to a higher order of things than the physical portents which cause more astonishment.

S. Greg.  
Mag. Hom.  
in Evang. 39.

28 He sent darkness, and it was dark : and they were not obedient unto his word.

The Prayer Book here follows the LXX., while the A. V., keeping to the Hebrew, translates, with the Chaldee, S. Jerome, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, *they rebelled not against His word*, to which the Vulgate comes near, as it retains the negative, while putting the verb *exacerbavit* in the singular. A question at once arises, Who are the persons spoken of? The most satisfactory reply seems to be that the Egyptians are meant, taking the judgments patiently. And note that the order of the plagues in Exodus is not followed exactly (indeed the fifth and sixth are omitted) and the *darkness*, here put first, is precisely the calamity which extorted from Pharaoh, till then immoveable, nearly the whole demand of Moses, albeit on finding him resolved to take the cattle, the concession was rescinded. A second opinion is that Moses and Aaron are spoken of, as having faithfully discharged their appointed task, while a third holds that the darkness is declared to have been obedient to the command of Moses to spread itself over Egypt and to leave Goshen clear; and a fourth suggests that the children of Israel accepted Moses and Aaron as their delegates with full powers to treat with Pharaoh on their behalf. A further explanation is that Moses always spoke gently to Pharaoh, urging him to repentance, and that God dealt gently, not bitterly, by withdrawing each plague when intreated, without suffering it to do its worst. The difficult Latin reading is usually explained to mean that God did not allow His words to become void, but fulfilled them thoroughly, as otherwise they would seem deserving of being cast away, like unripe fruit, or else would have brought new bitterness upon Israel from Pharaoh; while the current Greek reading obviously points to the obstinate opposition of Pharaoh to the demands of God, though the older text seems to have substantially agreed with the Hebrew.

A.  
S. Prosper.  
Rosen-  
müller.

Exod. x. 24.

Trevetius.

Cajetanus.

P.

D. C.

C.

R.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

Ay.

Theodoret.



Haymo says very well that darkness is put first here, because it denotes blindness, since had it not been for blindness, none of the other plagues would have followed. Mystically, they explain the verse of the "blindness in part which happened unto Israel," albeit the LORD did not make His words bitter, but sweet and gentle in preaching to them and warning them. If we follow the Hebrew instead of the Vulgate, it will tell us of the "great company of the priests who were obedient unto the faith," when "the Word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem," in no long time after the mysterious darkness of three hours on Calvary, which told Israel that it was humbled like Egypt for rejecting that Prophet of the LORD, like unto Moses, for Whom their boasted lawgiver had bid them look.

29 He turned their waters into blood : and slew their fish.

Here the order of the plagues in Exodus is reverted to, and it is not unseasonable to cite some mnemonic verses which recall it :

Sanguis, rana, cynips, insectum, pestis, et ulcus,  
Grando, locusta vorax, tenebræ, mors primisatorum.

Bakius.

Blood, frogs, lice, flies, the murrain, and the blain,  
Hail, locusts, darkness, and the first-born slain.

On the meaning of the plague of blood, the reader is referred back to what is said under Psalm lxxviii. 45. It is expedient to add here the tradition mentioned by Josephus, that the waters of Goshen were turned into blood as well as those of the rest of Egypt, seeing that no exception is named in Exodus, but when the Hebrews desired to use them, they then, and then only, returned to their natural condition, thus preventing the Egyptians from availing themselves of the supplies of their serfs. Two further mystical interpretations, besides those previously cited, are found, one that the *darkness* is the effect of neglect and unfaithfulness of prelates and clergy, whose spiritual and temporal wealth is thereby *turned into blood*, that is, nepotism for the sake of their kindred, so that the laity and poor of the Church, typified by the *fish*, die of bodily and spiritual hunger, because the funds intended for teaching and alms are converted to private gain. The other view is that the plague of blood denotes the pollution by heretics of the pure waters of Christian doctrine, to their own destruction and that of their unsettled and wandering disciples.

Antiq. Jud.  
v.

Hugo Card.

Honorius.

30 Their land brought forth frogs : yea, even in their kings' chambers.



Honorius.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Hugo Card.

To the expositions given under Psalm lxxviii. 46, two others may be added, that there is here a reference to the prating of false philosophers, such as the dilettante Pagans whom Julian the Apostate gathered in the Imperial Court; or that advocates and lawyers, employed by prelates to conduct suits regarding mere temporal possessions, instead of preachers of the Word, are here intended. No one who is familiar with the diocesan and monastic history of the thirteenth century will marvel at the two great French and German contemporary Bishops regarding the multiplication of lawsuits about ecclesiastical estates as an Egyptian plague of the Church.

31 He spake the word, and there came all manner of flies : and lice in all their quarters.

Wisd. xvi. 3.  
Josephus.  
Antiq. Jud.  
ii. 14. 3.  
R. Saadia.  
R. Aben-  
Ezra.

A.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.

Hugo Card.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.

B.

It is to be noted that here, as in Exodus viii. 17, and Psalm lxxviii. 46, the translation *flies*, albeit a very ancient one, with much authority on its side, is purely conjectural, as the word עֲרֵב probably means simply a *mixture*; (Aquila, *ἄμικτος*) whence, as before observed, the oldest Jewish tradition is that the fourth plague was a mixed multitude of wild beasts. The Vulgate translates here the *dog-fly* and *mosquito*, and a favourite mystical interpretation is that they are types of pagan philosophers and subtle heretics, pricking and goading Christians with minute and trivial verbal suggestions of dialectic, and hovering round their victims with such craft that it is impossible to foresee their manner of attack, till they leave their poisonous sting behind. And another sees, not dissimilarly, biting sarcasm in the dog-fly, and petty scandal and detraction in the mosquitos. Again, the verse is explained of a multitude of petty anxieties and cares which beset the wicked, while a further view will have it that sins of the flesh are denoted.

32 He gave them hail-stones for rain : and flames of fire in their land.

C.

Hugo Card.

Honorius.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Whereas rain is intended to fertilize, and fire to warm, God in His vengeance sent them destruction under both forms, and He does the like when, for the sins of His people, He bids His prophets and preachers smite the wicked with words of alarm and threatening, and scorch them up with the terrors of judgment. And the teaching of heretics, leading to relaxation of morals, is hail, crushing, yet not refreshing, but arousing the fire of fleshly passion in their disciples. And it is also taken of the strife of the law-courts, attended by burning greed for the acquisition of riches, which is one of the forms of God's judgments on the ungodly, or, yet again, of violent oppression and tyranny, to which He delivers them up for a season.



33 He smote their vines also and fig-trees : and destroyed the trees that were in their coasts.

So the Prophet speaks of the judgment of God on the guilty nations, saying, "The vine is dried up, and the fig-tree languisheth; the pomegranate-tree, the palm-tree also, and the apple-tree, even all the trees of the field are withered; because joy is withered away from the sons of men." And this comes to pass when the fruits of good works are blighted by the craft of evil spirits and the desire of human praise, and the covering or bark of humility is stripped off, so that the branches become white and bare, having the name of holiness in works, but in reality being dried up. The *vine*, which yields the wine of compunction; the *fig-tree*, whence we gather the sweet fruit of devotion; the *trees of their borders*, denoting that almsgiving which should attend a man till his death, according to that saying of a Saint, "Mercy alone is the companion of the dead," all these graces and virtues are destroyed in the hearts of God's foes. Again, the vine may fitly denote the Doctors of the Church, who should give the people the wine of wise doctrine to drink, and the fig-tree the prelates and rulers, who should be gentle and protecting, feeding and overshadowing their flocks. But the former are apt to fall through pride, whence it is written, "Behold, the vine-tree is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work?" And the latter are apt to make great profession with little result, to be barren fig-trees, abounding in leaves, but with no fruit, and it is said of such, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" And when these chosen trees perish, the flock in general, those lesser trees that are in all the coasts, suffer too.

Joel i. 12.

S. Greg. M.  
Mor. viii.  
30.

Hugo Card.

S. Ambros.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Ezek. xv. 4.

S. Luke xiii.  
7.

34 He spake the word, and the grasshoppers came, and caterpillars innumerable : and did eat up all the grass in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.

For *grasshoppers* we should read with LXX., Vulg., and A. V., *locusts*, the well-known and terrible plague of the East, while the *caterpillar* is either the larva of the locust itself, or another variety of locust. There is a twofold explanation of the mystical intent, that the locusts and their larvæ denote false teachers or flatterers, corrupting and destroying the truth, either by propagating countless heresies, so as to ruin the spiritual harvest, or acquiring for their own personal gain the wealth intended for teaching and feeding the poor. Or again, the locust, with its quick bounds and rapid flight, may denote the proud and presumptuous, and the wingless locust, seeming to remain quiet and harmless, while working much

A.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Honorius.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.



evil, may signify hypocrites. Cardinal Hugo, who explains the verse of the flatterers and hangers-on of prelates, sums up the qualities which make locusts fit emblems of parasites :

*Multa, volans, saltans, inimica satis, retro major.*

Many, winged, leaping, foe to crops, of larger size behind.

That is, they are a very large class, they fly away in time of adversity, they aim at rank and power, they are hostile to all untried merit, the crop whence a future harvest may be hoped, and they care only for temporal wealth, the "things which are behind."

Phil. iii. 13.

35 He smote all the first-born in their land : even the chief of all their strength.

L.  
Lyranus.

S. Gaudent.  
Brix.

S. Greg.  
Nyss. De  
Vitâ Mosi.

Pererius.

Honorius.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

1 Cor. xiii. 3.

Hugo Card.

Rev. ii. 4.

There is a Hebrew tradition that at the time of the slaughter of the first-born, judgment went forth also against the idols of Egypt, that the stone images fell into powder, the wooden ones rotted, the metal melted away, and the bull Apis died in his temple ; and that this is one sense at least of the phrase *the chief of all their strength*. So too, the Christian writers declare that when CHRIST went down into that Lower Egypt of Hades, He wrought destruction amongst the most powerful of the evil spirits, so that their dominion has ever since been sorely impaired and diminished. And by His precepts, whereby He warns His disciples against the first beginnings of sin, against a hasty word and an unchaste glance, as well as against murder and adultery, He slays the first-born of Egypt even still, as in His first victory He overcame sin, death, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. But in the case of sinners, He either destroys the principle of faith in such as give themselves over to heresy, and thus slays the chief of their spiritual strength ; or charity, so that all the best of our remaining good things are of no avail, according to that saying, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Or again, not dissimilarly, the words denote that our first good works and efforts after holiness, are not counted any more if we relapse into sin ; for the LORD hath said, "I have against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works ; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

36 He brought them forth also with silver and gold : there was not one feeble person among their tribes.



The commentators are careful to point out that this *silver and gold* was not the fruit of extortion and robbery, but the wages for the labour of the Israelites, long due and unjustly kept back by their oppressive taskmasters. And further, the demand was made by the express direction of God, Whose property all the wealth of Egypt was, so that He did but reclaim His own from His stewards for another use. The mystical interpretation which is most favoured sees here the use made by Christians of secular learning and wisdom; the advantage they may derive from Pagan examples of truth, valour, lowliness and purity, and also the way in which the Church draws to herself from the world sinners whom she fashions into vessels of gold and silver for the house of God; in whom *gold* denotes heavenly wisdom, and *silver* eloquence in confession, praise, or preaching. And one very aptly points out that as the Hebrews were poor so long as they dwelt in Egypt, and obtained the wealth of that land only when they quitted it, so it is only in abandoning the world, of which Egypt is a type, that we can gain true riches, since we shall be bondslaves in want during our whole voluntary sojourn.

*There was not one feeble person among their tribes.* The Chaldee paraphrases thus, "And they were not condemned with the Egyptians to stumbling," that is, they did not suffer from any of the diseases which came upon their oppressors. So we read in another place: "The LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee." Euthymius points out the reason: that no one need be left behind because of incapacity to travel. Some writers have supposed that immunity from disease lasted all through the time of the wandering, but the Carmelite conclusively replies that as all but two of the whole adult multitude died in the wilderness, it is reasonable to suppose that illness and feebleness preceded death, as is usually the case. And hence the mystical exposition, that God gives those who come up out of sin not merely the gold and silver of spiritual riches, but strength enough to escape entirely out of the bondage of evil, because they can do all things in CHRIST, does not entitle us to assume the final perseverance of all so rescued, unless they keep in the King's highway. But when we reach our true Country, where is no sickness or sorrow, then truly there will be no feeble person in all our tribes.

To their first estate return they, freed from every mortal sore,  
And the Truth, for ever present, ever lovely, they adore,  
Drawing from that living Fountain living sweetness evermore.

And they drink in changeless being as they taste those waters clear;  
Bright are they, and swift, and gladsome, no more perils need they  
fear;

There the youth can know no ageing, never cometh sickness near.

Heeyochius.

C.

Haymo.

Hugo Card.

S. August.

cont. Faust.

S. Isidor.

Hispal.

Oddo Ast.

Beda.

S. Albertus

Magnus.

Hugo Card.

Eusebius

Gallicanus.

Targum.

Deut. vii. 15.

Z.

Agellius.

Ay.

S. Albertus

Magnus.

Z.

B.

Honorius.

S. Pet. Dam.

The Rhythm

Ad personis.



Hence they draw their life unending, passingness hath passed away,  
Hence they grow, and bloom, and flourish, freed for ever from decay,  
And deathlessness hath swallowed up the might of death for aye.

37 Egypt was glad at their departing : for they were afraid of them.

There is a division of opinion here as to the point of time indicated. The most obvious sense, adopted by the Rabbinical interpreters, and followed by many Christians, is that the beginning of the Exodus is meant, when the Egyptians rejoiced in being freed from the terrors of yet further plagues. The other view, more current amongst the Fathers and Schoolmen, is that the time pointed to is that immediately after the disaster of the Red Sea ; when the Egyptians feared lest the Israelites should return and devastate the country which had just lost its army.

Mystically, they remind us how, after the destruction of the herd of swine belonging to the Gergesenes, "the whole city came out to meet Jesus : and when they saw Him, they besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts," and thus impress on us how eager the ungodly are to rid themselves of the presence of the Saints, whose life is a perpetual reproach to them ; for "a scorner loveth not one that reproveth him : neither will he go unto the wise." And thus the Jewish priests never relaxed their efforts till they drove out the Apostles.

38 He spread out a cloud to be a covering : and fire to give light in the night-season.

In the army of Alexander the Great, the march was begun by a great beacon being set up on a pole as a signal from headquarters, so that "the fire was seen at night, the smoke in the day-time ;" and the plan is even still found in use amongst the caravans of Arabia. It is probable enough, in that unchanging land, that such may have been the custom at the time of the Exodus, and that God taught the people by parable in this wise, as well as by fact, that He was their true Leader, and Heaven the general's pavilion, whence the order of march was enjoined. The chief mystical interpretations have already been given under Psalm lxxviii. 14, and here may be added that CHRIST hides Himself in cloud from the wise of this world, who count themselves to be in the full light of day, but reveals Himself in brightness to such as acknowledge their darkness and ignorance. Not dissimilarly, the cloud is explained as the light affliction which God sends in the day of prosperity, lest man should be too proud, the fire, of the warm consolation bestowed in the night of sor-

Hugo Card.  
Lyranus.

D. C.

P.

&c.

A.

S. Prosper.

C.

Beda, &c.

L.

S. Matt. viii.  
34.

S. Albertus

Magnus.

Honorius.

Ric. Hamp.

D. C.

Prov. xv. 12.

B.

Quint. Curt.  
Alexander,  
5, ii. 7.

Stephen  
Langton.

Hugo Card.



row. There is yet a further and beautiful sense : that the cloud of the Manhood of CHRIST, which hid from us the bright rays of His Godhead, was *spread out* upon the Cross, in the *day* of His visible sojourn amongst mankind, while in the night of His absence, He sent the HOLY GHOST, in the fires of Pentecost, to be our guide into all truth.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Honorius.

39 At their desire he brought quails : and he filled them with the bread of heaven.

Beda, commenting on that place where it is written, "The LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full," reminds us that it was in the evening of the world when the WORD was made Flesh to be our food, and in the morning of His Advent, and still more of His Resurrection, we obtained that spiritual wisdom and knowledge of Holy Writ which was needed for the nutriment of our souls. He also points out another aspect of the two miracles, that the quails, given for a little time only, and then flying away, are the temporary laws and imperfect types of the Old Testament, intended for carnal minds, but that with the dawn of true faith comes CHRIST, the Bread of Heaven. Two other views about the quails are, that being winged, they denote heavenly thoughts, or winged words of preachers (yet flying low in humility,) sent to lift up our hearts to celestial things, and feed our hunger; or that as they were brought up by the south wind, they typify those graces of the HOLY GHOST, whereof the Bride exclaims, "Come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." And the reference to the Holy Eucharist as the Bread of Heaven is too obvious and frequent to need discussion here.

Beda.  
Exod. xvi.  
8.

B.  
S. Isidor.  
Hispal.  
D. C.  
Numb. xi.  
31.  
Hugo Card.  
Cant. iv. 16.

40 He opened the rock of stone, and the waters flowed out : so that rivers ran in the dry places.

When the side of the Rock of Ages was opened by the soldier with a spear, and there flowed out blood and water, typifying the Sacraments and graces of the Church; then the Hebrews refused to hear, and the Apostles turned then to the Gentiles, till then dry, as having neither the dew of grace, nor the rain of doctrine, and made the rivers of living water flow abundantly in Heathendom, so as to fulfil that prophecy of old : "In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert; and the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water."

Honorius.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Hugo Card.

Isa. xxxv. 6.

41 For why? he remembered his holy promise : and Abraham his servant.

It was not then for their merit, but of His own grace and

Honorius.



faithfulness, whence we are taught that to us also the heaven which He offers is a free gift, not the prize of our merit; and that because the LORD remembers His Holy Word, and bearing in mind the Atonement made by His beloved Son, the true Abraham, Father of many nations, brings, for His sake, His spiritual offspring into the Land of Promise.

42 And he brought forth his people with joy : and his chosen with gladness ;

The word *gladness* is, more exactly, *singing*, so that we have here a reference to the triumphal song of Moses and Miriam after the passage of the Red Sea ; and some draw a distinction between the excited *joy* of the whole body of the people, and the deeper and more spiritual *gladness* of the *elect*, Joshua, Caleb, and the children of the murmurers, who alone were to enter into possession of Canaan.

43 And gave them the lands of the heathen : and they took the labours of the people in possession ;

C.  
Agellius.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
Exod. xv.  
1, 91.  
Honorius.  
Cocceius.

L.

Honorius.

S. John iv.  
38.

The word *labours* implies more than the cultivation of the lands, and denotes the cities and all the accumulated wealth of the original possessors. Mystically, the reference is to the Apostles receiving all heathendom as their inheritance, and going to take possession of it, stored with the accumulated wisdom of the Old Testament, with all those types and prophecies, those precepts and statutes which had been the preparation for the Coming of that Messiah Whom the seers of the older covenant were not suffered to behold in the flesh ; and also with all the learning and previous training whereby the greater philosophical sects had, in their degree, tilled the ground for the reception of the Gospel seed, wherefore the LORD said unto His disciples : "I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour : other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."

44 That they might keep his statutes : and observe his laws. [Alleluia.]

This is the tribute or head-rent which God exacts in return for the bounties He confers, and it, in its turn, brings us on to the enjoyment of yet greater blessings. The *statutes* here refer to the positive and ceremonial, the *laws* to the moral enactments of the Pentateuch. For the very object of giving Canaan to the Jews was that they might there observe to the full God's laws with leisure and freedom impossible amidst the bondage and idolatry of Egypt. And thus similarly God bestows temporal subsistence on the priests of His Church, that they may not be obliged to toil in worldly concerns, but give themselves to the ministry of the Word

Bellarmino.

A.

Hugo Card.

Acts vi. 4.



and to prayer. Let Religious hear these words, and remember that the cloister is not intended as a place for idleness, luxury, or secular occupation, but for keeping the statutes, and observing the laws of God. Ye then, O children of God, who have the promise of life, here and in the world to come, if trouble oppress you, think of Joseph in prison, of CHRIST on the Cross. And in prosperity, deal not with God for its sake, but use it for Him, seeking "first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," so that at the close of all you will join in Honorius. the endless *Alleluia*.

Lu.

A.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD our God; glory be to the SON, His Anointed, the Bread of Heaven; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Fire that giveth light in the night-season.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

COLLECTS.

O LORD, we beseech Thee, as we call upon Thy Name, Ludolph. that as Thou didst feed our fathers with Angels' food when the power of Thy Name went before them, so Thou wouldst cherish and renew us also with mystical dainties. (1.)

Grant strength, O LORD, unto them that seek Thy Name, Mozarabic. and pour into them alway the holy love of seeking Thee, that such as desire to see Thy face may not be held captive by the allurements of the world, but the light of Thy countenance may glorify them in bliss. (11.)

O LORD, make us to rejoice in Thy holy Name, as we tell Mozarabic. of Thy wondrous works, grant us wisdom in seeking Thee, and power to find Thee, that we may attain to behold Thee, and to rejoice evermore in the vision of Thy countenance. (11.)

Increase Thy people exceedingly, O LORD, and exalt them Mozarabic. either by merit or works, that we, who are gnawed by the teeth of the envious, may ever advance in happiness by Thy gracious goodness. (11.)

We beseech Thee, O LORD, that Thou wouldst blot out Pseudo-Hieron. the wicked nations before our face, and be Thyself the leader of our march, that evermore rejoicing in Thee, we may attain to be led into the Land of Promise, and enrolled in Thy kingdom, may with Thy Saints rejoice in everlasting gladness. (5.)

O GOD, Who showest Thyself sorely displeased at our wickedness, prick, we beseech Thee, our hearts into repentance, that we may intreat Thy mercy, and obtaining pardon for our sins, may give thanks unto Thee with a pure conscience, call upon Thy Name, and in return for the bounties we have received, unweariedly tell of Thy wondrous works. (1.)

D.C.



## PSALM CVI.

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

## ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, sent as salvation by the FATHER, hath visited us by His Advent. The Voice of the Church to the Apostles and to the people. This Psalm is to be read with Exodus. The Voice of CHRIST to the Apostles or of the Apostles to the people, or the Voice of the confession of sins.

VEN. BEDE. There is a brief prefatory counsel in the title, that the whole Psalm should be sung with rejoicing unto the LORD. The Hebrew people is introduced as *giving thanks*; because having abandoned the unfaithfulness of its fathers, it hath been led to the loving-kindness of the LORD by His mercy; so that we are to understand that, when they were converted, they fitly sang *Alleluia* for their redemption.

Therefore, in the beginning of his narrative, he prays that he may be joined to that well-pleasing people which was to be gathered out of the Gentiles at the coming of the LORD. *O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious.* Secondly, he details the sins which his fathers had committed, by no means beholding with a right heart the LORD's wonders in Egypt, but that nevertheless the gracious LORD had delivered them from their enemies. *We have sinned with our fathers.* Thirdly, he relates that they returned to their love of sinning, but that the LORD was appeased by the prayers of Moses. *But within a while they forgot His works.* Fourthly, he declares that their iniquities were repeated; and that the impending wrath of the LORD was pacified by the supplication of Phinehas. *They thought scorn of that pleasant land.* Fifthly, he mentions that they provoked Moses at the waters of strife, and that after this they sacrificed their sons unto idols; wherefore the LORD, being very wroth, delivered them over to the bondage of their enemies. *They angered Him also at the waters of strife.* Sixthly, he prays for what he knew to be coming: that the Catholic Church may be gathered from all nations, and celebrate together the praises of the LORD with everlasting gladness. *Deliver us, O Lord, our God.*

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. He urges them to keep the Commandments of the LORD: and teaches them that the more the Jews erred the more ought we to fear, lest we should talk together in church, or dispute with our brethren in any wise, and especially when we are present at the time of the mysteries and prayer. When we sin, that we should repent.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. An instruction concerning the impiety of the Jewish nation.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm with confession.

## VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* Saturday: Matins.

*Ambrosian.* Friday of Second Week: II. Nooturn.



*Parisian.* Monday : Matins.

*Lyons.* Saturday : II. Nocturn.

*Quignou.* Saturday : Matins.

## ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* } Visit us \* with Thy salvation, O LORD.  
*Monastic.* }  
*Lyons.* }

*Ambrosian.* As preceding Psalm.

*Parisian.* Visit us \* with Thy salvation, O LORD, that we may see the felicity of Thy chosen.

*Mozarabic.* First portion : Who can express the noble acts of the LORD, or show forth all His praise? Second portion : Deliver us, O LORD our God.

This Psalm stands in close relation with the preceding one, and like it, is mainly historical in its scope. But whereas Psalm cv. deals with the manifestation of GOD's goodness to the children of Israel, we have here the tale of their ingratitude for His mercy and loving-kindness, accompanied with a prayer for pardon and deliverance out of captivity, the form of which, at the close of the Psalm, seems to fix the date near the end of the seventy years' exile, perhaps in the interval between the first and second emigrations from Babylon.

1 [Alleluia.] O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is gracious : and his mercy endureth for ever.

This verse is borrowed directly from 1 Chron. xvi. 34, where it forms part of David's Psalm on the translation of the Ark. It re-appears in substance as part of the service on the dedication of Solomon's Temple, as a familiar liturgical formula in the time of Jehoshaphat and in that of Zedekiah, as revived by Ezra at the foundation of the Second Temple, and finally as in continued use under the Maccabees. It recurs, however, but once again in the Psalter, namely, in Psalm cxxxvi., which is made, to use a term of hymnology, *super* this phrase. One instance of its employment in the rites of the Christian Church is a memorable one, for on the occasion when Syrianus and his soldiers broke into the church of S. Theonas, where the Pope of Alexandria, S. Athanasius, was officiating, the Saint, remaining seated on his pontifical throne, bade the deacon commence the chant, "O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is gracious, because His mercy endureth for ever," and soon after, borne out by his monks in the midst of the tumult which ensued, escaped the hands of his enemies. The usual ambiguity of the LXX. and Vulgate word *confesse*, in the first verse, has led the earlier commentators to point out that the words *for He is gracious* are applicable to either view. If we approach Him to give Him thanks, there are countless examples of His goodness to

1 Chron. v. 13; vii. 3; xx. 21.  
 Jer. xxxiii. 11.  
 Ezra iii. 11.  
 1 Mac. iv. 24.

S. Athanasius, Apol. pro fuga.

A.  
 C.



supply us with matter ; if to acknowledge our sins, we know that " He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And *His mercy endureth for ever*, the ever of this whole mortal life, inasmuch as He is always ready to welcome the returning prodigal, the ever of eternity, because even in heaven it is simply His love and good pleasure that will sustain the Saints in immortality, sinlessness, and impassibility.

1 S. John 1.  
9.

Honorius.

2 Who can express the noble acts of the LORD :  
or show forth all his praise ?

Tertullian  
de Trinitate,  
c. 81.

D. C.

Our sight fails us when we look upon the sun, overpowered by the splendour of his rays ; and the mind's eye suffers the like in every meditation on God, and the more attention is bestowed in thinking of God, the more is the mental vision blinded by the very light of its own thoughts. For what canst thou say of Him, what, I repeat, canst thou adequately say of Him, Who is sublimer than all loftiness, and more exalted than all height, and deeper than all depth, and clearer than all light, and brighter than all brightness, and more splendid than all splendour, stronger than all strength, more vigorous than all vigour, fairer than all beauty, truer than all truth, and more puissant than all puissance, and greater than all majesty, and mightier than all might, richer than all riches, wiser than all wisdom, gentler than all gentleness, juster than all justice, more merciful than all mercy ? And he saith *powers* (Vulg.) in the plural, because of the divers effects of that one undivided power which alone exists in God, and because of the mighty works powerfully carried out by God. For seeing that God is of infinite power, and is Almighty, no created thing can perfectly comprehend or express His power. Wherefore they are most insane of mind who are bold to measure the divine power with their intellect, declaring that God cannot act supernaturally, and that nothing is to be believed which exceeds the limits of human reason.

3 Blessed are they that alway keep judgment :  
and do righteousness.

A.  
Bellarmine.

L.

The immediate and natural answer to the question put in the previous verse is " No one ;" but yet there are some who, though unable to show forth all the praise of the LORD, may yet not inaptly lift their feeble voices in His honour, namely, such as praise Him by their lives as well as their tongue, who *keep judgment* by forming a right opinion as to their duty in every matter (because they do not swerve from God's laws as their rule,) and *do righteousness* by acting thereon unflinchingly. We may *keep judgment* too, in another sense, by bearing in mind the second Advent of the LORD, and the necessity we shall be under of standing before His tribunal ;



remembering the counsel of the Wise Man, "Before judgment examine thyself, and in the day of visitation thou shalt have mercy." Something more than mercy; reward for those who have left all for CHRIST, and have not repented them of so doing. Yet again, we may keep judgment by holding in our hearts an assize of that contest between the spirit and the flesh, and giving sentence against the latter, which has nothing but passionate utterances to advance in reply to the wise pleadings of the judge, "for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." And we are bound to keep judgment not only as regards ourselves, but for others too, by avoiding all harsh decisions as to their merits, all false dealing, all untrue flattery, and similar offences against righteousness. Observe, moreover, that the blessedness is only for such as act thus *always*, who are just, not by fits and starts, but persevering to the end.

Ecclus.  
xviii. 20.

Hugo Card.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Philip de la  
Greve.

1 Cor. xi. 31.

S. Gaudent.  
Brix.

A.

4 Remember me, O LORD, according to the favour that thou bearest unto thy people : O visit me with thy salvation ;

The LXX. and Vulgate read *us* in both clauses of this verse, but the Hebrew is more forcible, as it presents the Psalmist asking for himself that he may have his part in the mercies vouchsafed his nation. It was, most probably, at the first, the cry of a captive in Babylon, asking, it may be, freedom to join his happier brethren who had begun the new Exodus, and thus to be visited with God's *salvation*; albeit some hold that the latter clause of the prayer asks for a personal deliverer. And this latter is the sense put on the passage by the Christian expositors, who take the whole as a petition for the manifestation of CHRIST, according to the favour He should be pleased to show to His own people, when the Dayspring from on high should visit them. Some commentators, dwelling on the phrase the *well-pleasing of Thy people* (*εὐδοκία, beneplacito*) suggests that instead of meaning God's favour, as most understand it, or that portion of His people which is obedient and faithful, as some explain, the word may be identical in meaning with the *salvation* of the latter clause, and point to that Beloved Son, in Whom the FATHER is "well pleased," in Whom alone others may become well-pleasing too. They are here agreed in alleging that the song of the Angels on the morning of the Nativity, when they chanted of "peace on earth to men of good will," (*εὐδοκίας*), bore special reference to this prayer of the Psalmist. There is an ancient Jewish gloss which is noteworthy, that the petition is for a share in the Resurrection in the days of Messiah, in order to see His wonderful restoration of His suffering people; a meaning apt enough for our use also, for the verse forms a *Y.* and *Ry.* in the Responsory at Sext on the First Sunday in Advent.

L.

S. Chrysost.  
A.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
S. Luke i. 78.  
S. John  
Damasc.  
Honorius.

A.

S. Matt. iii.  
17.

L.

S. Luke ii.  
14.  
R. David.  
Cocceius.

Brev. Rom.



5 That I may see the felicity of thy chosen : and rejoice in the gladness of thy people, and give thanks with thine inheritance.

- Hugo Card. S. Albertus Magnus. The prayer is twofold, as regards this world, and that to come. We may see even here, in a glass, darkly, the spiritual happiness of the Saints who believe in CHRIST, and partake their continual joy in the love of God, and so learn to join
- Bellarmino. in their acts of constant devotion and worship. We may, more blessedly still, be admitted to the glory of the Beatific Vision, wherein consists the gladness of God's ransomed ones, and unite in the perpetual thanksgiving of heaven. And we may note that the threefold nature of man prompts
- Hugo Card. the union of the three petitions of this verse in one. *That I may see*, is the prayer of the body, desiring the open vision of God ; *and rejoice* is the wish of the soul or mind, that the affections may likewise be gratified ; *and give thanks*, as the spirit needs to pour itself out in worship. Further, there are three names here given to the Saints, each for a reason of its own. They are God's *chosen*, because of His predestining grace, "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love;" they are His *people*, having one law and one worship under Him as sole King, "and what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law?" they are His *inheritance*, for it is written, "I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance." We are not left to conjecture the first meaning of this prayer as mentioned above, for the LORD
- Z. Himself spake to His disciples, saying, "Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things which ye see, and have not seen them."
- S. Albertus Magnus.
- Eph. i. 4.
- Deut. iv. 8.
- Ps. ii. 8.
- S. Matt. xiii. 17.

6 We have sinned with our fathers : we have done amiss, and dealt wickedly.

- R. Levi. Genebrardus. The Rabbins tell us that there are three kinds and degrees of sin here set down in an ascending scale ; against one's self, against one's neighbour, against God : sins of ignorance, sins of conscious deliberation, sins of pride and wickedness.
- S. Bonaventura. S. Bonaventura alleges that these sins are distinguished here as severally committed against the several Persons of the Holy Trinity. And in these respects we *sin with our fathers* in three ways, by imitating their guilt, by inheriting their evil qualities, by our corporate identity with them in national existence. Cardinal Hugo bids us observe that
- Le Blanc. when Prelates do wrong and sin, thereby leading the priesthood and the laity into evil, the latter have no right to lay all the blame on their erring superiors, but must take their own share of it.
- Hugo Card.



7 Our fathers regarded not thy wonders in Egypt, neither kept they thy great goodness in remembrance : but were disobedient at the sea, even at the Red Sea.

The belief that many of the Israelites lapsed into idolatry while in Egypt, encouraged as it is by other passages of Scripture, is supposed by some to gain consistency from this place also. But there seems no reason for holding it to imply more than their callousness to the teaching of the plagues, and their terror and murmur on the very brink of the Red Sea at the sight of Pharaoh's army, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" And that this is the true sense of the passage is clear from another place: "And Moses called unto Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs and those great miracles; yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." In like manner, we read that immediately after the feeding of the five thousand, when CHRIST came, walking on the sea, to the ship of the disciples, "they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered; for they considered not the miracle of the loaves; for their heart was hardened." Hence the Doctor of Grace enforces the lesson that Scripture treats the non-understanding of things which ought to be understood, the forgetting of things which ought to be remembered, as itself a sin, so that it cannot be justly pleaded in excuse or mitigation of transgressions, albeit such is the usual custom of sinners.

R. Abraham  
Levita.  
Joshua xxiv.  
14.  
Ezek. xx. 7.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Exod. xiv.  
11.  
Deut. xxix.  
2.

L.

S. Mark vi.  
51.

A.

8 Nevertheless, he helped them for his Name's sake : that he might make his power to be known.

It was not for their merits, seeing that they were a perverse and stiffnecked generation, that He delivered them, but that they might serve as teachers to the heathen, by forcing on them the lesson of His irresistible might, and thus "to make Himself an everlasting Name." And therefore God's deliverance of sinners has always this end of instruction of the spiritual understanding of others. And this He effected most perfectly when He won the Gentiles by dying on the Cross for the Jews.

A.

Isa. lxi. 12.

C.

Hugo Card.

9 He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up : so he led them through the deep, as through a wilderness.



Philip de la  
Grève,  
Serm. 325.  
Ric. Hamp.  
Hugo Card.  
Honorius.

He performs the like of this miracle still, when He *rebukes*, by the mouth of the preachers of righteousness, the bitter, angry and turbulent heart of man, a very *sea* of passions, making it *red* with the blush of shame, and drying up the billows of desire, the depths of sin, so that man can go through the midst of them, avoiding the extremes on either hand, as on solid ground, *like a wilderness*, in being sure under the foot, calm and quiet, the abode of fasting and temperance, shunned by evil spirits and bad companions, and therefore lonely amidst the rush and tumult of the world.

10 And he saved them from the adversary's hand :  
and delivered them from the hand of the enemy.

11 As for those that troubled them, the waters  
overwhelmed them : there was not one of them left.

Origen.  
Honorius.  
S. Isid.  
Hispal.

Ay.

1 Cor. x. 1.

Hugo Card.

Ay.

L.

Ps. cxix.  
136.  
Ps. vi. 6.  
Honorius.

It is the most usual of all interpretations to see in this passage of the Red Sea, and the consequent destruction of the Egyptian host, the Baptism of Christians in those waters which have been tinged with the precious Blood of CHRIST, whereby they are delivered out of the hand of Satan, and all their former sins, original and actual, are washed away in that cleansing tide, so that not one of them remains to be imputed. This interpretation is warranted by those words of the Apostle : " All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea ; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." They raise some discussion on the phrase *hand of the enemy*, teaching us that of the two hands of our adversary, that with which he drove us by force, and that wherewith he draws by lure, the former has been utterly destroyed by CHRIST, and the other sorely weakened, so that it has far less power than of old to entice us ; but that it is never so dangerous as when it is full of gifts. Reminding us also that the waters of penitential tears will wash away post-baptismal sin, they point out that the word *overwhelmed* shows that such tears, to be effectual, must be copious, and not a mere drop or two. Our eyes must " gush out with water," and " wash our bed " with the floods. A further interpretation sees here a reference to the history of the early Church, brought safely through the Red Sea of ten fierce persecutions, and that so triumphantly, that within a little while, the classical Paganism which had endeavoured to extirpate Christianity was itself utterly abolished, so that not one of the old rites continued ; but that thereupon the Church fell away from her first love, and lapsed into carelessness and sin.

12 Then believed they his words : and sang praise  
unto him.



So it is written, "And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and His servant Moses. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He cast into the sea." But we may note the hardness of heart which would not believe till *then*, till they had seen. And of such the LORD spake, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe;" and they need His rebuke to His doubting Apostle, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." And in the very brevity of this verse, the only one of its kind in the narrative portion of the Psalm, we may well see how short-lived were their gratitude, belief, and worship of God; as it follows at once,

Agellius.  
Exod. xiv.  
31; xv. 1.

C.  
S. John iv.  
48.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
S. John xx.  
29.

13 But within a while they forgot his works : and would not abide his counsel.

The first clause is given by A.V. marg., LXX., and Vulgate, *They made haste, they forgot*. The phrase does not imply only the shortness of the interval, although that notion is included, but the precipitance and recklessness with which the people altered their mind, acting like children on mere impulse, without due reflection. Their want of faith also is shown, in that they cried out for food before they experienced any scarcity or hunger, and they would not *wait* for God's counsel, His foreordained plan for bringing them unto the Land of Promise. Hence, this haste is typical of all those who are eager to obtain their pleasure at once, and therefore snatch greedily at temporal things, forgetting that "he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent," and thereby refuse to wait patiently for the good things of Heaven, which God hath prepared for them that love Him. In this they are like Reuben, and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, who said while in Gilead, "Let this land be given unto thy servants for our possession, and bring us not over Jordan." Once more, *abiding His counsel* may very well have reference to the act of consulting the divine will through the agency of Moses, for which the Israelites usually proved far too impatient, preferring to act on their own impulse.

Agellius.

Honorius.

A.  
Hugo Card.  
Prov. xxviii.  
20.

Numb.  
xxxii. 5.

Rosen-  
müller.

14 But lust came upon them in the wilderness : and they tempted God in the desert.

Here there are two separate grounds of blame; first, that their desire was *lust*; that is, a craving for something not absolutely necessary, inasmuch as they were fed without

L.



- s. Chrysost. stint already; and next, that this tempting of God was in the *wilderness*, precisely where the sense of utter dependence on Him, the absence of all human succour, ought to have exercised restraining influence upon them. To give thought to luxury in a monastery, to seek it in exile, to dwell on it during a pilgrimage, is an unbecoming thing, and the like of this was what the children of Israel did. The two words employed for the *desert* denote severally the *loneliness*, and the *unwatered place*, where they take occasion to remind us that a heart given up to be a habitation for wild beasts, and unbewed by the grace of the HOLY SPIRIT, is the usual scene of lust and temptation.
- Honorius.  
Hugo Card.

15 And he gave them their desire : and sent leanness withal into their soul.

- The Syriac, LXX., and Vulgate, all read *satiety* (πλησμομή, *saturitatem*) instead of *leanness*, looking as they do to the historical narrative, "Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; but even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you." But the Prayer Book version certainly follows the existing Hebrew text, and gives a profounder meaning. The early versions are, however, so far right, that the Psalmist here seems to lead up to the phrase which they give, and by a sudden turn, with a play upon words, to substitute the vocable actually found. Here we have ׀׀׀, *leanness*, but in Ps. cxlv. 16, where the exactly opposite idea is expressed, we have ׀׀׀, *desire*, or *plenteousness*, a word scarcely distinguishable in sound. The turn might be imitated in English somehow thus: "And He gave a banquet to please them, and spread a *fast* for their soul," where the ear expects the word *feast*, and meets with sudden disappointment.<sup>1</sup> The two readings, nevertheless, are not irreconcilable in their ultimate meaning. The Vulgate denotes the weariness and disgust which carnal gratification always brings with it, as gluttony often produces the same result as famine, by destroying the digestive powers, and thus causing utter distaste for food; while the other notion is that the Israelites were punished with phthisis, or some analogous wasting disease, that the food did not nourish them, and that *leanness* hints at the skeleton form of death, which ensued thereupon: whence the allegorical reference to spiritual things is equally clear.
- Numb. xi. 19.
- Bellarmino.  
Cocceius.  
Agellius.
- Genebrardus.
- R. Abraham.  
R. David.  
Lyranus.

<sup>1</sup> Reinke suggests that the LXX. may have read φαγ, *food*, but the explanation above seems more satisfactory, and leaves the text untouched.



16 They angered Moses also in the tents : and Aaron the saint of the LORD.

17 So the earth opened, and swallowed up Dathan : and covered the congregation of Abiram.

18 And the fire was kindled in their company : the flame burnt up the ungodly.

Observe how GOD, Who passed over the murmuring of the people against Himself at the Red Sea, punished severely this rebellion against His servants. We may learn hence His wrath against such as, despising His priests, and withdrawing themselves from the fellowship of His people, form congregations of their own, set up altar against altar, and offer unlawful sacrifice instead of the true oblation of the LORD's Body. They too *anger Moses in the tents*, who make little here in the Church Militant of those baptismal waters out of which they have been drawn, and *Aaron the consecrated one of the Lord*, when they despise the "shining light" of Divine illumination vouchsafed through the sacramental acts of the Priesthood which God has hallowed for Himself; and would fain have as their prelates worldly and carnal men instead of saints, so that both they and their nominees perish, swallowed up by the earth of secular cares and anxieties, devoured by the fire of covetousness, wrath, and luxury. The emphasis on Aaron, as the *Saint* of the LORD, points to his High Priesthood, not to any exceptional personal holiness, and has reference to the objection raised against his monopoly of office by Korah, on the ground that "all the congregation are holy." There is, however, no mention of Korah in this place, a circumstance due most probably, to the position of his descendants, the Korhites, as Temple-singers; for while we read of the destruction of the families of Dathan and Abiram, it is expressly stated that, "notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not." They would naturally be reluctant to commemorate their ancestor's sin in a psalm designed for public worship, and hence the omission; or, if they were not themselves its composers, their high position and character would have swayed its real author in like manner. The name *Dathan* probably means a "fountain," while *Abiram* is "father of exaltation," and we may then remark that we read of the LORD's threat against Babylon, "I will make her springs dry," thus betokening the complete destruction of the prosperity of the wicked of this world, and the yet more total destruction of him who "is a king over all the children of pride," delivered over to everlasting burnings with all his congregation.

s. Chrysost.

s. Isid.  
Hispal.

Hugo Card.

L.

Numb. xiv.

s.  
R. Kimchl.  
De Muis.Numb. xxvi.  
11.

Jer. li. 26.

Job xli. 34.

19 They made a calf in Horeb : and worshipped the molten image.



20 Thus they turned their glory : into the similitude of a calf that eateth hay.

Agellius.

There is a peculiar stress on the words in *Horeb*, as denoting the very place where the great manifestation of God's power and presence had been made, and where the Law had been given, whose very first words were a prohibition of the sin of idolatry.

Honorius.

And the Prayer Book wording of the twentieth verse implies that while without doubt the Egyptian worship of the bull Apis suggested the form of the idol which Aaron made, the intention of the Israelites was to worship the true God under a visible symbol, not to substitute another deity for Him. But others interpret it, They *bartered* their glory for an ox, &c., which implies a change in the object of worship. Mystically, their guilt is repeated

Hugo Card.

by all such as in the "dry place" (*Horeb*) of a heart unwatered by the HOLY SPIRIT, turn from heavenly things to carnal ones, and barter their *glory*, the promise of a divine inheritance, for the gratification of the flesh, which is the devouring of *grass*, or who flatter and abase themselves before unworthy prelates and princes, instead of keeping their tokens of reverence for God only. And the Jews themselves repeated this sin, when at Calvary they rejected their Glory, and chose Barabbas, fit type of that coarse and sensual multitude of which the poet says,

Isa. xl. 6.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
C.

Horat.  
Epist. l. 2,  
27.

Nos numerus sumus, et fruges consumere nati.

We are a crowd, born but to eat of food.

21 And they forgot God their Saviour : who had done so great things in Egypt;

22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham : and fearful things by the Red Sea.

C.

The three epithets of God's manifestations in these verses, rising to a climax, are intended to emphasize the incredible folly and fickleness of the Jews, in that they not merely failed in gratitude, but were unable to retain such striking and important events in their memory. Disloyal Christians do the like, when they forget the *great things* of CHRIST'S Incarnation and Nativity, the *wondrous works* of His miracles wrought in this dark world, the *terrible things* of the sanguine tide of His bitter Passion, which so many men fear to imitate, which caused such dismay to the evil spirits. Wherefore we ought not to forget Him, Who hath borne such things for us, "Forget not the friendship of thy Surety, for He hath given His life for thee." "So long as I live," exclaims a Saint, "I will remember the toils which the LORD endured in preaching, His weariness in going about, His temptations in the fasting, His watchings in prayer, His

Honorius.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Hugo Card.

Eccles. xxix.  
15.  
S. Bernard.



tears of compassion. I will remember also the sorrows, reproaches, spittings, buffetings, mockings, insults, scourgings, and the like; for if I do not, the Blood of that Righteous One, which was poured forth upon the earth, will be required of me."

23 So he said, he would have destroyed them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the gap : to turn away his wrathful indignation, lest he should destroy them.

Whilst they murmured only for bread and water, He bore with them as a nurse with her fosterchild, but when their madness reached such a pitch of wickedness as this, they were scourged. And God, very wroth because of their impious course, was minded to destroy them utterly, and spake to Moses, saying, "Let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation." But Moses, the one whom He had chosen to deliver the people out of Egypt, like a valiant champion, standing in the very breach and gap of the shattered wall which they had broken down by their guilt, opposed himself bravely to the wrath of God, as it was rushing on the people, and repelled His advancing vengeance with prayers and supplication, saying, "LORD, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people?" Therefore Moses fought with prayer, as the strongest of weapons against God, and blunted His shafts and swords, and that according to His own will, nay, His indirect suggestion. For He told Moses that He would destroy them, for that their deserving was such that they might be justly rooted out altogether. And so He complains by the mouth of Ezekiel: "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none; therefore have I poured out Mine indignation upon them." A greater than Moses, One "drawn out" of the many waters of His sore tribulations, has taken His stand for us in the gap of that broken fence of mankind, His own most Sacred Body, broken by and for our sins, broken in the Blessed Sacrament, broken with nails and spear upon the Cross, to plead on our behalf. When, therefore, the Priest at the Altar makes the fraction of the Host, we may bear in mind the perpetual intercession which goes up for us before the throne of God, and take courage; and all earthly deputies of our great High Priest may remember, that intercessory prayer will often effect the conversion of sinners, who have remained unmoved by the preaching of the Word.

24 Yea, they thought scorn of that pleasant land : and gave no credence unto his word ;

S. Athanasius.

Agellius.

Exod. xxxii. 10.

Exod. xxxii. 11.

Ezek. xxii. 30.

S. Albertus Magnus.

Hugo Card.

Pseudo-Hieron. Honorius.



25 But murmured in their tents : and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.

L. These verses refer to the evil report brought back by ten of the twelve spies sent to search out Canaan, who said, "The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, and all the people we saw in it were men of a great stature." In the first of these charges, they showed disbelief of God's description of the land as one "flowing with milk and honey;" in the second, equal disbelief of His power to overcome the giant inhabitants before the face of Israel. And the second of the two verses gives us some clue to their conduct. They were

Numb. xiii.  
32.

Josh. v. 6.  
Ezek. xx. 15.

C. *in their tents*, therefore idle and inactive, not exercising themselves in diligent toil; they *murmured*, and so, busied in listening to their own voices, could not hear the still small voice of God. And all those who have become careless and cold in faith, and think but little of the promised glories of Heaven, believing not those things which are spoken by the

Honorius.

Hugo Card.

Arnobius.

Le Blanc.

S. August.  
Serm. 26, ad  
Fratr. in  
Kremo.

Lord Jesus, the Word of God, but murmur here in the tents of the body, in the hidden recesses of their inner thoughts, at every trial necessary to be endured before conquering that country, sin as did the Jews of old. We who do not believe God, murmur in the tabernacles of our minds; and how is it that we have the boldness to say to God, "Hear my voice," when we do not hearken to the voice of the Lord? Wherefore S. Benedict laid down as one of the chief precepts of his Rule, "Above all, that there be no murmurings." An elder master of the Religious Life than he, S. Pachomius, was wont to relegate to the infirmary any monk guilty of murmuring, as suffering from disease, and needing especial tendance and regimen, under which he was kept until he gave proof of amendment. And that because, as S. Augustine observes, when himself preaching to Religious, murmuring is as contagious and fatal as leprosy, and affects not only the speaker, but all the hearers.

26 Then lift he up his hand against them : to overthrow them in the wilderness;

27 To cast out their seed among the nations : and to scatter them in the lands.

Targum.  
Agellius.  
Genebrardus.  
Honorius.

*Then lift He up His hand*, in the act of solemn asseveration with an oath, as the Chaldee paraphrase takes it; or else we may understand it of raising the arm in order to strike more forcibly, which is the usual exposition. But the correctness of the former is shown by two passages, Exod. vi. 8, marg., and Ezek. xx. 15, the latter of which runs: "Yet also I lifted up My hand to them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land, which I had



given them." The close juxta-position here of the death in the wilderness and the dispersion of (seemingly) the next generation amongst the heathen, has led some Rabbins to see in the latter clause not the Babylonian captivity, far less the Roman extirpation, separated from the former event by many centuries, but the two raids of the Amalekites and Canaanites at Hormah, when Israel lost both spoil and captives. But it seems better to follow the other interpretation, looking at the nation in its corporate capacity as identical, even after a great lapse of centuries, with the rebels of Zin; albeit the distant posterity of these fell through transgressions of their own, and not by reason of merely inherited guilt. And He does the like to obstinate unbelievers or sinners still, whom He overthrows in the desert of this world, causing them to die in their sins, so as not to enter the rest of Paradise, casting out their seed, their followers and disciples, among the heathens, by classing them with pagans, ("if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen man and a publican") and scattering them in the imagination of their vain hearts into the lands of darkness and the shadow of death.

R. Kimchi.  
De Muls.

Agellius.  
Rosen-  
müller.

Ric. Hamp.

S. Matt.  
xviii. 17.  
Hugo Card.

28 They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor :  
and ate the offerings of the dead.

*They joined themselves.* More forcibly, *they yoked themselves.* The LXX. and Vulgate, with S. Jerome, read *they were initiated or consecrated*, that is, were taught the mystic rites of *Baal-Peor*, the Moabite god of fertility and generation, whose worship, like that of his analogue, the Western Priapus, was attended with much immorality, hinted at by the verb here employed, and plainly expressed in the Mosaic narrative. *Offerings of the dead.* That is, either sacrifices made to dead and lifeless idols, contrasted with the Living God; or, more probably, some necromantic rites, such as are twice alluded to as "seeking to the dead," and exemplified in the history of the Witch of Endor; possibly attended with oblations made to the departed. On this verse is based the Rabbinical prohibition of all meats offered in sacrifice to idols, as being equally polluting as contact with a dead body; and hence arose the case of conscience amongst the new Christian converts as to the lawfulness of such food, which the Apostle S. Paul resolved in a prohibitory sense; not unnecessarily, as is shown by a passage in the Apocalypse, where both these offences of the Israelites are named as current in the Church of Pergamum. The allegorical interpretation favoured by Christian expositors is that all persons who give themselves over to the gratification of the physical appetites are thereby *joined unto Baal-Peor*; and that whenever we either make evil men priests for money or favour, and suffer them to celebrate the Christian Sacrifice, or else

Genebrardus.

1 Cor. vi. 16,  
17.  
Numb. xxv.  
1, 3.

Deut. xviii.  
11.  
Isa. viii. 19.  
Delitzsch.

1 Cor. x.  
26.  
Rev. ii. 13.

Arnobius.  
Honorius.  
Hugo Card.



accept gifts made to the Church by unrepentant sinners, dead in their sins, whom we have not endeavoured to bring to life again through repentance, we *eat the offerings of the dead*, and are partakers of their evil deeds.

29 Thus they provoked him to anger with their own inventions : and the plague was great among them.

Genebrardus.  
Numb. xxy.  
5, 9.

Agellius.

Numb. i. 23;  
xxvi. 14.

Arnobius.

The word *plague* is here used in the sense of any violent and sudden destruction ; (here, of course, the slaughter of the twenty-four thousand offenders, and perhaps a pestilence also;) and there is a Hebrew tradition that the chief weight of the blow fell upon the tribe of Simeon, whose prince Zimri was slain by Phinehas ; a notion which is supported by the twofold census of that tribe before and after the sin in Shittim. At first the Simeonites numbered fifty-nine thousand three hundred warriors ; but afterwards only twenty-two thousand two hundred are reckoned. The Latins dwell on the word *inventions*, as signifying rites and deities adopted by the people at their own caprice, in contrast to the divine revelation of the Law, but there is no force of the kind in the Hebrew word, which is simply *doings*. And Arnobius, writing at the terrible crisis of the break-up of the Roman Empire, dwells on the words *multiplied ruin* here used by the Vulgate, as aptly depicting the destruction of cities and devastation of whole provinces, which followed on the relaxation of political, military, and above all, religious discipline.

30 Then stood up Phinees and prayed : and so the plague ceased.

31 And that was counted unto him for righteousness : among all posterities for evermore.

C.

Targum.

Aben-Ezra.  
R. Kimchi.

Agellius.

*Stood up*, as valiantly to do his work of zeal, as Moses had done to discharge the office of intercession, and because he alone rose to set the example of resistance to the foul rites of Baal-Peor. *And prayed*. This is the sense given to פָּדָה by the Chaldee, Syriac, and by one of S. Jerome's renderings, *exoravit*. The LXX. and Vulgate both have *appeased*, (ἐξέλασσο, *placavit*;) which comes to much the same thing ;<sup>1</sup> but the A. V. reading, *executed judgment*, is to be preferred, or else *mediated*, arranged the dispute between God and the people, which seems the force intended by S. Jerome's *dijudicavit*.

*And so the plague ceased*. As the slaughter performed by the Levites appears by the Mosaic narrative to have begun

<sup>1</sup> This may very well be the Hiphil or Hithpaël of the verb, but it is Piel here.



by Phinehas smiting Zimri and Cozbi, this intimation of the cessation of the plague cannot refer to that, and we may therefore reasonably conclude that there was a divine pestilence at the same time as the execution by human justice, so that Phinehas on this occasion, like Aaron on a previous one, stood between dead and living to make propitiation, and stayed the plague. Hearken diligently to this, O Priest, remarks an ancient commentator, thou to whom souls are intrusted, unsheath thy sword, slay fornicators; that is, "preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine," that it may be counted unto thee for righteousness, for the Lord hath said, "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them: and I will make thee to this people a fenced brazen wall." And with this sense agrees very well the meaning of *Phinehas*, which is "mouth of brass," as though a trumpet making proclamation before the Lord, for the conversion of sinners, as it is written in another place, "When the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount."

Numb. xxv.

7.

Numb. xvi.

48.

Pseudo-

Hieron.

2 Tim. iv. 2.

Jer. xv. 19.

Erod. xix.

13.

L.

*And that was counted unto him for righteousness.* Because the High Priesthood was not merely conferred upon himself, but though it passed for a little into the family of Ithamar as a punishment for the sins of Eli's sons, yet the office was restored to the ancient line in the person of Zadok, a descendant of Eleazar, when Abiathar was deprived by Solomon. And we find on the one hand, the succession carried on in the house of Zadok till the Captivity, and on the other, Mattathias, father of the Maccabees, under whom the offices of King and High Priest were united, describing Phinehas as his ancestor. The Sacerdotal Kingdom lasted till the days of Herod the Great, when the Great High Priest Himself, from Whom Aaron derived the original commission of the Levitical order, appeared to resume the charge He had temporarily committed to His creatures. Faithful priests still obtain the reward of Phinehas, from the generation of this world to the generation of the Resurrection, and with the angels for evermore. But alas! exclaims S. Bernard, in words not less suited to our day, where are Prelates to be found, who will be as Phinehas to fornicators, as John to kings, as Elias to priests?

1 Sam. ii.

30.

1 Chron.

xxiv. 3.

1 Kings ii.

27. 35.

1 Chron. vi.

8. 13.

1 Macc. ii.

54.

S. Albertus

Magnus.

S. Bernard.

32 They angered him also at the waters of strife : so that he punished Moses for their sakes ;

33 Because they provoked his spirit : so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

These verses clear up the ambiguity of the narrative in the Pentateuch, from which it is not quite evident why Moses was forbidden to enter the Land of Promise, and we learn that his hasty words, rather than the twofold striking of the

Numb. xx.

10.



Agellius.  
Theodoret.

Agellius.

Isa. lxiii. 10.

R. Kimchi.  
R. Ishaki.

L.  
Jans. Gand.  
Campensis.  
Agellius.  
Targum.

A.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.

S. Isid.  
Hispal.  
Honorius.

Hugo Card.

rock, constituted his main offence. The Greek Fathers bid us remark that his fall occurred immediately after the death of his sister Miriam, and that it is quite possible that grief for her had so far disturbed him, that when the people broke in upon his mourning with their complaints, he lost patience altogether. This interpretation agrees with the clause *they provoked his spirit*, which appears to be the sense of the LXX. and Vulgate. But the verb never has this meaning, and the Chaldee is therefore to be followed here in its rendering, *they resisted His Holy Spirit*, referring the clause to God, and not to Moses; according to that passage of the Prophet, "They rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit," the result of which was that Moses, in his haste, *spake unadvisedly with his lips*, saying, "Hear now, ye rebels;" though there is a doubt as to whether *they* is spoken of Moses and Aaron, or of the murmuring Israelites. It is to be noted further as a fresh difficulty in this obscure verse, that many commentators explain the last clause as spoken of God, translating it, *He commanded with His lips*, which is the Greek *διετρελες*, or *He spake clearly*, the Latin *distinxit*, His sentence against Moses and Aaron. The more usual explanation of this phrase amongst the Latin Fathers, however, refers it to Moses, interpreting *he made a difference with his lips*, namely, that whereas he had spoken in confident faith when about to work all his former miracles, a tone of doubt and hesitation creeps in here for the first time. The mystical interpretation is twofold. One sees in the doubting lawgiver, twice smiting the Rock, a type of the Jewish nation smiting the Rock of Ages in later days with the redoubled cry of "Crucify Him, crucify Him," amidst the strife which raged around Pilate's judgment-seat. The other view is that Moses is the type of any prelate in times of controversy, when disputes on matters of secular learning, veritable *waters of strife*, prevail in *Kadesh*, the "holy place" of the Church, so as to rouse him into indignant remonstrance, often beyond the limits of Christian charity.

34 Neither destroyed they the heathen : as the LORD commanded them ;

35 But were mingled among the heathen : and learned their works.

Bellarmino.

L.  
Josh. xvii.  
13.  
Judges i. 34.

Ezra ix. 2.

Some commentators prefix the last words of the thirty-third verse to these, and read the whole, "God spake plainly with His lips, saying, *Neither destroyed they the heathen.*" It is evident from the narrative in Joshua and Judges that no motives of clemency induced the Jews to spare the Canaanites, but that either desire of gain by putting them to tribute, or else lack of valour and endurance in warfare, caused their disobedience. *Mingled* implies not merely familiar intercourse, but intermarriage with the heathen, such as we read



of in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, as forbidden to the Jews, just as many councils prohibit Christians from marrying with pagans or heathens, while the result is added in saying that the Jews *learned their works*, namely, their superstitions and idolatries. They were types of Christians who do not extirpate the seven deadly sins altogether from their souls; for we often enter the Land of Promise in great force, strengthened with the inward hope of everlasting life, but after overcoming our greater sins, we keep the lesser ones, allowing them to dwell like the Canaanites in the land, under tribute indeed, because they are usually subjugated, but yet proving to be snares and traps and scourges in our sides, and thorns in our eyes, till, only too often, we perish off the good land which the LORD our God hath given us, weakened to our destruction by that very tampering and league with sin which we thought would have given us peace and strength. So it follows:

Nehem. xiii.  
33.  
Honorius.  
Hugo Card.  
S. Isid.  
Hispal.

Josh. xxiii.  
13.

36 Insomuch that they worshipped their idols, which turned to their own decay: yea, they offered their sons and their daughters unto devils;

37 And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters: whom they offered unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was defiled with blood.

38 Thus were they stained with their own works: and went a whoring with their own inventions.

*To their own decay.* It should be, as A.V., *which were a snare unto them*. The LXX. and Vulgate, reading a *scandal*, or cause of stumbling, give the sense, though not a literal version. There is no direct mention in the Pentateuch, nor yet in Joshua and Judges, of the special offence of human sacrifices here laid to the charge of the Jews, but as that sanguinary rite attended the worship of Baal and of Molech, the Ammonite god, and was certainly practised by Ahaz and other Hebrews during the decline of the kingdom, it is not unlikely that the sin may have cropped up at intervals at an earlier period. The word *devils*, דִּמְיוֹן, occurring only here and in Deut. xxxii. 17, simply translates the *demons* of the LXX. and Vulgate. *False gods* would be a better rendering, but the literal sense of the term is "lords" or "tyrants," from a root דָּמָה, to "oppress" or "destroy." As regards the rite of their human sacrifices, it is stated that the victim to be burnt was laid upon the outstretched hands of a gigantic brazen statue, beneath which the fire was kindled, or that it was compelled to pass between two blazing pyres, near enough to cause death before the passage was

Bellarmino.  
Jer. xix. 5.  
2 Kings xvi.  
3.  
2 Chron.  
xxviii. 3.

R. Kimchi.

R. Shelomo.



accomplished. A third view is that the normal rites of burnt-offering were observed, by the previous slaughter of the victim, and then the cremation of the body upon an altar. But the second of these theories is most probably the true one, because on the one hand, the phrase "pass through the fire" to Molech occurs several times in Holy Writ, and on the other, the curious custom of dancing round a huge bon-fire on the night of May Day or of Midsummer Eve, with occasional leaps of the dancers through the flames, was common not so very long ago in many parts of Europe (notably in Scotland,) and still lingers in a few remote places, just as Theodoret describes it in his day. The latter phrase, *shed innocent blood*, seems to point to a different form of mactation, common enough in Pagan rites, but put down with a high hand by the Romans wherever they became masters, at any rate, after the decree of the Senate in A.U.C. 657, prohibiting all such sacrifices. It is noteworthy that one place which seems to have clung most obstinately to the custom was Carthage, (itself a colony of the very Canaanites whom Joshua was instructed to destroy,) whereof we read that on one day three hundred human victims were offered to Saturn, and that Tiberius, Proconsul of Africa about two centuries after CHRIST, succeeded in suppressing the custom only by crucifying the priests who abetted it. Whence a Latin poet observes of Carthage:

Lev. xviii.  
31.  
2 Kings xxi.  
6; xxiii. 10.  
Ezek. xx. 31.

Plin. Hist.  
Nat. xxx. 1.

Diod. Sic.  
xx.

Sil. Ital. iv.  
767.

Mos fuit in populis quos condidit advena Dido,  
Poscere cæde Deos veniam, et flagrantibus aris,  
Infandum dictu, parvos imponere natos.

The nation roving Dido founded, erst was wont  
To plead with slaughter to the Gods for grace,  
And upon blazing altars to devote  
Their little children ; horrible to tell.

Min. Fel.  
Octavius.

Minucius Felix, in his simple prose narrative, adds a fresh touch of horror to this account, by mentioning that it was the task of the parents to make the oblation, and that they caressed and kissed the babes at the moment of death, not out of tenderness, but to avoid the evil omen of a wail. Well might another early Christian writer observe that it were better to have no gods than such cruel ones.

Lactantius.

Luc. Brug.  
Agellius.  
S. Chrysost.  
Theodoret.

A.

*And the land was defiled with blood.* The guilt and pollution of the inhabitants extended to the country itself, so (as many will have it) that it was cursed with sterility, after having been a marvel of fruitfulness. The reading *interfecta*, "slain," for *infecta*, "tainted," in the older Latin copies, following the LXX. *ἡφονοκτονήθη*, may be rendered, "was a scene of murder," or, as many take it, was a place where men by their crimes slew their own souls. And in the closing verse of this paragraph we may note the notion of idolatry being an adultery of the virgin of Israel against God her

L.



Spouse, a type which impresses forcibly on us the close connection between error of doctrine and laxity of morals.

The allegorical expositions are numerous. There is first Le Blanc. the tolerably literal notion that parents who bring their children up badly, who give them over to evil company, or who neglect them altogether, are in fact sacrificing them to devils, and shedding innocent blood. They do the like when they set them bad examples, a rule which holds good for prelates towards the clergy, and pastors towards their flocks. Again, Hugo Card. our spiritual thoughts, studies, and pursuits, as the stronger, Arnobius. are denoted by sons; in secular ones, the weaker, by daughters, Honorius. and a bad use of these is giving them over as sacrifice to demons, and then the *land* or *earth* of our bodies, wherein should stand the temple of the HOLY GHOST, becomes polluted by sin, and we are guilty of adultery against the Bridegroom of our souls, following our own inventions, rather than His precepts.

39 Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people : insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.

40 And he gave them over into the hand of the heathen : and they that hated them were lords over them.

41 Their enemies oppressed them : and had them in subjection.

In these and the following verses the Psalmist gives an Bellarmino. abstract of the history of Israel under the Judges, with the view of reminding his countrymen that the disasters of the Captivity were but the repetition of earlier calamities, also penalties for national sin ; and yet that repentance had invariably been followed by pardon and rescue, whence patient hope and steadfast prayer might again look for their reward. The judgments inflicted by God upon the Christian Church Honorius. at various times of laxity and coldness, the giving up clergy and laity alike to the dominion of those sins with which they Hugo Card. had tampered, so that they became their bondslaves ; the bridling, as a Saint puts it, with the curb of servile fear those s. Chrysost. boastful, proud, and vain-glorious idolaters, so as to check their madness, and inspire them with horror and disgust of the evil ways of their oppressors, form the sum of the allegorical interpretations in this place.

42 Many a time did he deliver them : but they rebelled against him with their own inventions, and were brought down in their wickedness.

43 Nevertheless, when he saw their adversity : he heard their complaint.



44 He thought upon his covenant, and pitied them, according unto the multitude of his mercies : yea, he made all those that led them away captive to pity them.

- Heb. xi. 22. "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." "And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so. And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them, and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel." *He pitied them.* More exactly, with LXX., Vulg., and A. V., *He repented*, not that God is subject to passions and to change of purpose, but that He looks mercifully on penitents and does not exact the punishment He threatens; and thus, when He finds us repentant, He shows Himself to us according as we have conducted ourselves towards Him. *To pity them.* All this was fulfilled in the later history of the Jews. There is no trace of any such compassion on the part of their earlier conquerors, but it appears again and again under Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes, Alexander, and even the earlier part of the Roman dominion. And that this is the true sense of the passage appears from its exact parallelism to the language of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple: "Forgive Thy people that have sinned against Thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against Thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them away captive, that they may have compassion on them." But the Vulgate rendering, *He gave them unto mercies in the sight of them that captured them*, is sometimes explained as referring only to God's dealings with Israel, and His miraculous deliverances of them out of the hand of their enemies, so as to impress these latter with His irresistible power and His unchanging care of His people.
- Judg. ii. 17.
- S. Hieron.  
C.
- Eusebius.  
S. Athanasius.  
S. Chrysost.  
Z.
- 1 Kings viii.  
50.
- Bellarmino.
- De Mu's.



The former exposition is, however, much to be preferred, and it also yields the fuller typical meaning, as showing how the Jews, the most despised of all people, long regarded as the superstitious followers of an obscure and ridiculous belief, were accepted in the persons of the Apostles and Evangelists as teachers of all nations, and furnished the first examples of those Martyrs and Confessors who begat such countless generations of spiritual children. So too, interpreting the Psalm of the early struggles of the Christian Church, we may bear in mind that the greatest missionary success, at any rate, the most striking and durable, was the conversion of the barbarous nations who overthrew the Roman Empire, and shared its provinces into kingdoms for their petty chieftains. Nay, there are examples, such as that of S. Nina in Georgia, where a solitary Christian slave, acting like Naaman's little handmaid, proved the means of bringing the tidings of salvation to a whole people. There is a tropological exposition also, referring all this latter part of the Psalm to God's dealings with individual souls, which need hardly be dwelt on, save in the one place where S. Albert the Great and Cardinal Hugo, apparently quoting in common some earlier writer, dwell with their usual wealth of Scriptural illustration on the phrase *brought down in their wickedness*. For the sinner is humbled, or brought down, as they tell us, in many ways. From a son of God he becomes a son of the devil. "If God were your Father, ye would love Me; ye are of your father the devil." From rich he becomes poor. "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." From a king he becomes a retainer. "He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle." From a freeman he becomes a slave. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." From an heir he is disinherited. "No whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of CHRIST and of God." From a soldier he becomes a clown. "He took away his purple, and rent off his clothes, leading him through the whole city." From a priest he becomes degraded: "I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to Me." From a temple of God he becomes a fane of Bacchus: "I will lay this temple of God even with the ground, and I will break down the altar, and erect a notable temple of Bacchus." From the member of God he becomes the member of an harlot: "Shall I then take the members of CHRIST, and make them the members of an harlot?" From healthy he becomes sick: "He fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." From comely he becomes hideous: "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, . . . their visage is blacker than a coal." From strong

L.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Hugo Card.

S. John viii.  
42, 44.  
Rev. iii. 17.

Job xii. 18.

S. John viii.  
34.  
Eph. v. 5.

2 Mac. iv.

30.

Hos. iv. 6.

2 Mac. xiv.

33.

1 Cor. vi. 15.

S. Luke x.

30.

Lam. iv. 7.



- Lam. i. 6. he becomes weak : "They are gone without strength before the pursuer." From stable he becomes unsettled : "Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore she is removed." In all such ways as these is a sinner brought down and made to sit in the dust till he repent.
- Lam. i. 8.

45 Deliver us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen : that we may give thanks unto thy holy Name, and make our boast of thy praise.

46 Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel from everlasting, and world without end : and let all the people say, Amen. [Alleluia.]

1 Chron.  
xvi.

R. Kirchli.  
Deut. xxviii.  
25.

L.

Alcuin.  
Hugo Card.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.

These verses, with slight verbal changes, are found as the closing part of David's Psalm at the bringing-up of the Ark, but appear to be there added liturgically by the compiler of Chronicles, as there is no historical appropriateness in them to the events of that king's reign, nor is the Dedication Psalm itself prophetic in tone, so as to justify us in accepting the view that the Prophet-King foretold the Captivity in these words, as the Rabbinical commentators will have it, and as he might readily have done, with the warnings of Moses before his eyes. These words point evidently to an existing condition of things, and may very well have been composed for the restored Temple-worship by the earliest band of emigrants as a prayer on behalf of their still exiled brethren, or by the yet captive exiles themselves, intreating for a share in the partial deliverance already vouchsafed. There is thus a special fitness in the words, *O Lord our God*, because they had abandoned for ever the idolatry which had proved the besetting and deadly sin of the nation, and had clung faithfully to the worship of JEHOVAH in the midst of Babylonian heathenism. But inasmuch as they could celebrate no sacrifices, save the Passover, and had but the imperfect ceremonies of the Synagogue for their spiritual aid, it is added, *that we may give thanks unto Thy holy Name*, by making thank-offerings and peace-offerings, as of old, in the central shrine of Jerusalem. A favourite exposition of these verses, with the Latins, is to couple them with the last clause of verse 44, and to explain them as denoting the three stages of Christian perfection. God first gives us mercies in the sight of the heathen, by granting repentance to us, which looses the bonds by which the evil spirits hold us captive : this is the purgative way. Next ; He gathers us out of the nations, by separating us from the world and all evil companionship, making us a chosen generation to Himself. This is the illuminative way. And finally, He brings us into the glories of His everlasting kingdom, where we make our boast of His holy Name JESUS, whereby He has saved us, and boast in that alone,



joining in the great doxology of the ransomed multitude, "as Rev. xix. 6. the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, *Amen, Alleluia* : for the LORD GOD Omnipotent reigneth," that Song of praise which, as it is that to which the four Gospels lead, fitly closes the fourth book of the Psalter.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD GOD of Israel ; glory be to the SON, our SAVIOUR, Who hath visited us ; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the gladness of the people of GOD.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

Remember us, O LORD, according to the favour Thou bearest unto Thy people ; and setting us free from the bondage of sin, save us by the visiting of Thy salvation.

Save us, O LORD our GOD, and visit us with Thy salvation ; and let the teaching of Thy fear, not the punishment of our iniquity, humble us, that we may make our boast in Thy praise, and give thanks unto Thy Name, that Thy goodness may cause us to see the felicity of Thy chosen, and the inheritance of Thy kingdom admit us to praise. (11.)

Remember us, O LORD, according to the favour Thou bearest unto Thy people ; and visit us with Thy salvation, that we who, with our fathers, have done evil before Thee, may be delivered, by Thy restoring grace, from condemnation of original, and the taint of actual sin. (11.)

Save us, O LORD, Who art the author of our salvation, and gather us out of the nations, Thou Who art the freedom of Thy redeemed and the ransom for their freedom. Grant us, therefore, that we who now sorrow at our mingling with evil, may by Thy protection and decree, rejoice in that peacefulness into which Thou bringest Thy saints. (11.)

Bless us, O LORD GOD of Israel, from everlasting and world without end. Thou Whom the manifold creation praises in manifold variety of nature, remember Thy holy covenant, and let it repent Thee according to the multitude of Thy mercies, that we may wash away with rivers of tears and groanings of heart the wickedness we have committed, and the sin which we have incurred with our fathers through the transmission of guilt. Deliver us therefore, O LORD, out of the hand of the spirits that hate us, and redeem us from the craft of our enemies, that we who believe in Thy Word, may be defended by the strength of that our belief, and thus the confession of the lowly may ascend to the heights of heaven, and the salvation poured upon us by Thy Word may come to our aid. (11.)

Gather together in mercy, O LORD, Thy scattered people, which Thou didst once deliver in the might of Thine arm,



wherewith Thou camest to redeem the world, wherefore Thou art much invoked by them Thou didst redeem; that Thou Who didst vouchsafe to be made weak as man for our sakes, mayest stablish us men with the protection of Thy Godhead. (11.)

Mozarabic.

O GOD, Who purifiest the hearts of them that confess to Thee, and loosest the self-accusing conscience from every bond of sin, grant pardon unto Thy servants and bestow upon their bodies the wholesome medicine of heavenly grace. (11.)

D. C.

Remember us, O LORD, with Thy favour, and teach us to do righteousness always, and make us ever to boast in Thy praise, and to bless Thee, O GOD of Israel, from everlasting and world without end. (1.)

## PSALM CVII.

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

### ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST the WORD, sent by the FATHER, healed us from the destruction of everlasting death. The Voice of CHRIST concerning the Jews, who forsook GOD in prosperity, and called upon Him in adversity. This Psalm is to be read with the lessons of Judges and Numbers. The Voice of CHRIST concerning the Jews, forsaking Him in prosperity, and in trouble calling upon the LORD; and a confession of the might and mercies of the LORD. The Voice of CHRIST concerning the Jews. To be used with the book of Judges and Numbers. He prophesies concerning the Advent, the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews.

VEN. BEDE. In the first *Alleluia* (Ps. cv.) the Jewish people, against which there is no complaint, is praised. In the second, he makes mention of those of that nation who had erred by very frequent offences, and had returned to the LORD's favour by His mercy. Here, moreover, the Christian people is exhorted to give praise to GOD for the benefits He has bestowed. Otherwise: The first *Alleluia* means, that believers should be baptized. The second, that penitents should be reconciled; there, He received "His people with joy and His chosen with gladness;" here, "He hears them and gives them mercies in the sight of them that led them away captive." In the third, our daily use is repeated, and the Novatian heresy is condemned.

After the confession of the Hebrew people, of which the previous Psalms have spoken, the Prophet comes to the Christian people, which was roaming and wandering in the wilderness of superstition throughout the regions of the whole world; exhorting them, in the first section, to give thanks unto the LORD, redeemed by Whose Blood, they who had been led away with foolish error by the altars and



groves of demons, have received the Churches: *O give thanks unto the Lord.* In the second part, he saith that thanks should be paid to the LORD, Who satisfied with the abundance of His religion the souls of the Gentiles, hungering for the food of truth, and burst the bonds of their sins with His irresistible might: *O that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness: for He satisfieth the empty soul.* Thirdly, he enjoins thanks to be offered to the FATHER, because CHRIST hath come and broken the devil's gates and bars: *O that men would therefore praise the Lord . . . for He hath broken the gates of brass.* Fourthly, he urges that the sacrifice of praise should be offered to the LORD by the priests, who preside over the governance of the Church amidst the waves of the world, describing how the LORD vouchsafes to aid them in temptations: *O that men would therefore praise the Lord . . . and offer unto Him the sacrifice of thanksgiving.* Fifthly, he again saith that priests and elders should praise the LORD, Who by His heavenly bounty hath changed into the most genial pleasure the world which was foul with the drought of sin, which the right of heart beholding shall rejoice. These sections begin with similar verses, which are called intercalary. *O that men would therefore praise the Lord, . . . exalt Him also in the congregation of the people.*

**SYRIAC PSALTER.** Anonymous. It is uttered concerning Joel and Abiah, sons of Samuel, who recited the Commandments of the LORD. GOD gathered the Jews out of captivity, and brought them out of Babylon. And JESUS CHRIST, the Only-Begotten SON of GOD, gathered the nations from the four quarters, by preaching, unto Baptism.

**EUSEBIUS OF CESAREA.** A prophecy concerning the calling of the Gentiles, and the prayer of the righteous, and of the taking up of the WORD of GOD to the heavens.

**S. ATHANASIUS.** A Psalm with confession.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* Saturday: Matins.

*Ambrosian.* Friday of Second Week: III. Nocturn. [Easter Eve: Matins.]

*Parisian.* Tuesday: Matins.

*Lyons.* Saturday: Nones.

*Quignon.* Saturday: Matins.

#### ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* As preceding Psalm.

*Monastic.* From my distress \* deliver me, O LORD.

*Ambrosian.* O that men would praise \* the LORD for His goodness. [Easter Eve: For He hath broken \* the gates of brass; and smitten the bars of iron in sunder.]

*Parisian.* He helpeth \* the poor out of misery: the righteous will consider this, and rejoice.

*Mozarabic.* First portion: Let them give thanks whom the LORD hath redeemed: and delivered from the hand of the enemy. Second portion: The LORD sent His Word, and healed them: and they were saved from their destruction.



This Psalm, though separated from its immediate predecessor in the Hebrew distribution of the Books of the Psalter, is closely related to it and to the 105th in scope and diction. Its language points clearly to the end of the Babylonian exile, and yet there is a certain vagueness of expression, a lack of direct statement either of absolute deliverance, of the restoration of the Temple worship, or of the name of Jerusalem, which so far militates against its character as a post-Captivity Psalm, that some critics have denied it any specific historical character, and regard it as little more than generally didactic. There is one item of internal evidence which is tolerably conclusive against a post-Captivity date, which is that in the third verse, where the four quarters of the horizon are named, the *sea* stands for the south, a sufficiently correct description of the Persian Gulf for an inhabitant of Babylon, but impossible to a Jerusalemite speaking of the Mediterranean, always the sea in Palestinian language. It would seem then that the present Psalm is a hymn of thanksgiving composed for the use of the synagogue in Babylon, after the decree of Cyrus had been promulgated, and while the exiles were gathering together from all quarters of his empire, probably at Babylon itself, for the homeward march of the first caravan under Zerubbabel. This hypothesis seems to reconcile the difficulties, and to account for the absence of any name for the city referred to in the fourth verse. Babylon itself, with its large Jewish population, and the regular services of the Great Synagogue, would seem almost home to the Jewish pilgrims from the borders of India, or the frontiers of Scythia, cut off as they had been from all religious fellowship with their people, and the worship they found there established would lead them to look onwards to a dearer and more sacred city, towards which they were at last, by Divine mercy, suffered to direct their steps.

1 O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is gracious :  
and his mercy endureth for ever.

Honorius.

The HOLY GHOST begins the Fifth Book of the Psalter with praise, and ends it with praise, because they who spiritually observe the Pentateuch of the Law shall, with the Angels, praise God for evermore. These three Psalms (cv., cvi., cvii.) begin in the same fashion, for the three orders in the Church praise in like manner the Holy Trinity. The first, personifying both peoples (Jewish and Christian) sings of the Advent of CHRIST, and afterwards of the blessings of the faithful, which God conferred materially on the elder people, and spiritually upon the new. The second, personifying the Church, sings in confession of the sins of the Jews, telling of what the people in its unfaithfulness committed before CHRIST's coming, and how, afterwards, in its unbelief, it repaid the LORD. The third, personifying the Church of the Gentiles, sings joyfully of how the merciful LORD delivered the captive bondsmen out of the hands of the enemy, and the Good Shepherd gathered His scattered sheep from many lands into one flock.



2 Let them give thanks whom the LORD hath redeemed : and delivered from the hand of the enemy ;

3 And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west : from the north, and from the south.

In this Psalm we have set before us four temptations, four invocations, four deliverances in answer to these, four acknowledgments of the mercies of the LORD. The first temptation is error and lack of God's Word; the second is the difficulty of overcoming the passions of former habit; the third is weariness and disgust at the Word of God; the fourth is storm and peril in the guidance of the Churches. And while the primary reference is to the release of the children of Israel from captivity, and to their assembling to the Holy City from their various places of exile, yet a wider gathering, a greater redemption, the overthrow of a more formidable enemy, is spiritually foretold. It is the redemption with the Precious Blood of CHRIST from the dominion of Satan, the gathering of the Catholic Church out of all nations of the world, from the *rising of the sun*, the Jews, on whom God had bestowed the dawning light of knowledge of the Law, the actual presence of the Sun of Righteousness Himself, to the *sunsetting*, the Gentiles lying in actual darkness and ignorance; from the cold *north* of sin and carelessness as to religion, to the bitter and stormy *sea* of passionate unrest, into the one fold where He cherishes the wanderers. And we can use in our day with yet more effect Tertullian's argument that the Christian faith is the only one which can make its way and win disciples everywhere; "In whom else have all nations believed, save in CHRIST Who now hath come? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, and the inhabitants of Pontus and Asia, and Pamphylia, the sojourners in Egypt and the part of Africa which is beyond Cyrene, the citizens and strangers at Rome, the Jews too and other nations in Jerusalem, the various tribes of the Getulians and borders of the Moors; all the limits of the Spains, and divers tribes of the Gauls, and the regions of Britain untrodden by the Romans, but now subdued to CHRIST, and the lands of the Sarmatians, and Dacians, and Germans, and Scythians, and many hidden races and provinces and many islands unknown to us, which we are utterly unable to enumerate, in all which places the Name of CHRIST has already found its way and reigns." But the song which befits this "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues," who "shall come from the east and the west and from the north and the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God," is only for the *redeemed*, for those who know themselves to have been led

A.  
B.

Lu.

Ay.

R.

Tertullian.  
cont. Ju-  
dæos.

L.

Rev. vii. 9.

s. Luke xlii.  
29.



Rom. vii. 14. captive by the enemy, and "sold under sin," but now to be  
 1 S. Pet. 1. "redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold,  
 18. but with the Precious Blood of CHRIST." Those who choose  
 to abide in the prison of their sins, and they who do not  
 confess that they need a SAVIOUR, must be silent when this  
 Isa. xxxv. chant is raised, when "the ransomed of the LORD shall  
 10. return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy  
 upon their heads."

4 They went astray in the wilderness out of the way : and found no city to dwell in ;

Targum. The Targum restricts the historical sense of this verse to  
 the forty years' wanderings of Israel in the desert of Sinai,  
 S. Chrysost. while the Greek Fathers extend it to the sufferings of the  
 S. Basil. M. later Jews in exile after Nebuchadnezzar's conquests, and  
 Theodoret. to the toils of their homeward journey. But the deeper  
 meaning tells us of those who wander in the wilderness of  
 this world, unwatered by the rivers of grace, by the rain and  
 A. dew of the HOLY GHOST, by the tears of penitence, who  
 C. have strayed far from the Way, which is CHRIST, and have  
 The Gloss. lost the track which leads to the Heavenly Jerusalem. The  
 S. Bernard. words hold good especially of all such as are selfishly intent  
 Serm. 1, de on themselves alone, and thus, disregarding all social claims  
 SS. Pet. et upon them, separate themselves not only from the fellowship  
 Paul. of the Saints, but from all intercourse with others whom they  
 L. may help, or who may help them. Such as these find no  
 city to dwell in, they are at war with society, and alien from  
 the example of Him, the Way, Who taught in the streets of  
 Judea, and they have no peace here, since, as the Preacher  
 S. Hieron. saith, "The labour of the foolish wearith every one of them,  
 Eccl. x. 15. because he knoweth not how to go to the City."

5 Hungry and thirsty : their soul fainted in them.

Amos. vii. "Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of  
 11. hearing the words of the LORD." And observe that the  
 words imply eager longing, and cannot therefore be applied  
 Hugo Card. to such as are content to remain in ignorance. Rather we  
 Ay. may take them of those Gentile philosophers, notably So-  
 crates, Plato, and Aristotle, who laboured diligently to find  
 the truth,

Milton,  
*Paradise*  
*Lost*, li. 556.

And reasoned high  
 Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,  
 Fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,  
 And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.  
 Of good and evil much they argued then,  
 Of happiness and final misery,  
 Passion and apathy, and glory, and shame,  
 Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy.

Pseudo-  
 Hieron.

Wherefore *their soul fainted in them*, not because GOD was  
 hard and stern, but that in His love He suffered them to



fail, that they might call to Him in their need, and hearing His reply, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly; O beloved," they might learn to love their Helper.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Cant. v. 1.

6 So they cried unto the LORD in their trouble : and he delivered them from their distress.

7 He led them forth by the right way : that they might go to the city where they dwelt.

What counsel loosed them from such difficulties and straits, from wandering, from the wilderness, from that sore drought? O wondrous thing! one cry sent up to God from the heart, changed all for the better. "Truly," as one has wisely said, "troubles are the spurs to make us run to God." And observe, remarks a third Saint, they did nothing whatever but cry, exactly as they had done in Egypt; they performed no admirable actions, they merely called with their whole heart, and told their trouble plainly out to God, and at once their trials vanished, and the sorely needed help was given. And we may well believe that the prayer of many a Gentile, crying in the night, like Cornelius, through the preventient grace of God, went up in this manner, that the preachers of the Gospel might come over and help them. *He led them forth by the right way*; by the way of holiness and truth, by the personal guidance of the LORD Jesus Himself, and by the teaching of the Apostles. He did not merely show them the way, as one might point out a distant city from the summit of a lofty mountain, so that the wayfarer might miss the track when he descended into the plain, but He led them forth, and was Himself the guide and pattern of their journey, as well as their Teacher. And observe it is said *by the right way*. A sage once said to a king, who desired to avoid the toil of study, that there is no royal road to mathematics; the Evangelists and Apostles tell us, in the clearest language, that there is no crooked road to heaven. If the way be not straight, it leads not thither, for the one use of that way is that fallen men may recover Paradise, may once more go to the city where they dwell, for "here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

S. Greg.  
Nyss.

S. Thom.  
Villanov.

A.

Conc. Araus.  
L.

Le Blanc.

C.

L.

A.

Heb. xiii. 14;  
xi. 10.

8 O that men would therefore praise the LORD for his goodness : and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men.

The goodness (LXX. and Vulg., *mercies*) of the LORD denotes that He has called us to the Faith, that He has waited patiently for us, that He has lovingly converted us, freely justified us, made us to advance in holiness, and to persevere in good. The wonders are His Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, mission of the HOLY GHOST, and all the

D. C.



- C. miracles He hath wrought Himself or by the hands of His servants. These ought to be the theme of thanksgiving in private, of proclamation in public, for they are not meant for a single nation, but for all *the children of men*. This intercalary refrain recurs four times in the Psalm, at the eighth, fifteenth, twenty-first, and thirty-first verses. A mystical reason is given for the three former collocations, that as the eighth Beatitude re-echoes the first, so the eighth verse repeats the praise of the opening words of the Psalm; the number fifteen suggests the Psalms of Degrees, the steps of ascent to Heaven, and twenty-one denotes the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit bestowed by the Holy Trinity. And we may add, in the same strain, that thirty-one denotes the final reward of heaven, that which remains over and above for those who have fulfilled the moral law of the Decalogue in faith, hope, and charity. Or again, keeping the same thought in mind, we may note that Joshua did not finally conquer Canaan till he had overthrown and slain one and thirty kings.
- Hugo Card.
- Josh. xii. 24.

9 For he satisfieth the empty soul : and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

- Honorius.  
Targum.  
Bellarmine.  
A.
- D. C.  
Hugo Card.
- Prov. xxvii.  
7.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
S. Matt. v.  
6.
- D. C.
- Ps. xxxvi.  
8.
- This is the second temptation from which God delivers, by His second act of mercy, delivering us from the habit of sin and the difficulty of doing well; because there are many who, after being rescued from unbelief, are from evil habit unable to do right, because the embers of sin and the enticement of the flesh remain in them. The first reference is to the manna wherewith the Israelites were fed in the desert, a type of better things. The souls which were given over to idolatry were *empty*, because God was not in them, and they were bare of grace and spiritual gifts. These He *satisfies* with repentance, a bitter but necessary diet, while He leaves cloyed and full ones to themselves, for "the full soul loatheth an honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." He has something better than this in store, however, as He hath said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," here but gradually and according to the needs and powers of this life, but perfectly and absolutely in their Country, for as much as each soul truly, earnestly, purely, and reasonably longs for, whether of grace here or of glory hereafter, so much does God freely bestow, according to the measure of each one's capacity, till all are satisfied with the plenteousness of His house.

10 Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death : being fast bound in misery and iron ;

11 Because they rebelled against the words of the



LORD : and lightly regarded the counsel of the most Highest ;

12 He also brought down their heart through heaviness : they fell down, and there was none to help them.

The Chaldee paraphrast interprets these words of Zedekiah, King of Judah, a captive and blind ; who, according to a tradition mentioned by S. Jerome, was not only, as we read, chained with brazen fetters, but put into an iron cage at Riblah, and carried thence in the train of Nebuchadnezzar, like a wild beast, to Babylon, where, " bound in fetters, and holden with cords of affliction," he died after four years of suffering, into which hunger itself entered as an ingredient, because he *lightly regarded the counsel* which God sent him by the prophet Jeremiah.

The words set us before us in type the condition of the Gentiles before the coming of the LORD, for they did *sit in darkness*, lacking the light of faith, and blinded by unbelief. And in using the word *sit*, the Psalmist points out that they had been for a long time in this condition. *The shadow of death* was the corrupt life of this world, a terrible picture of the death to come. They were *fast bound*, who were held entangled in the cords of sin under the rule of the devil. *Beggary* (Vulg. *mendicitate*) refers to the scarcity of good, the sorest penury of all, which afflicts, not the body, but what is far worse, the soul ; and *iron* denotes the hardness of the sufferings, and also the difficulty of breaking the chains of old habits of unbelief and sin. " I was bound," remarks S. Augustine in his Confessions, " with no external iron, but by my own iron will." Thus the whole passage may fitly be explained of the condition of sinners, who *sit*, because of their determined perseverance in wickedness, *in darkness*, as being either ignorant, or because " the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not," so that " their foolish heart was darkened," *in the shadow of death*, as separated from God, who is the light and life of the soul ; *fast bound in poverty*, because lacking the power to do good, and *in iron*, because chained so as to be unable to flee from danger or evil, and that not because of any irresistible might in their enemies, but solely because of their own refusal to accept the light yoke and easy burden of the LORD, to give heed to His warnings and chastisements, and to listen to His preachers of righteousness and faith. Thus *He also brought down their heart with labour* (A.V., LXX., Vulg.) so that even the dungeon was not a place of rest, but of toil, in that the captives suffered as their fathers had done in Egypt ; that is, bondage to Satan does not involve mere incapacity to do good, but the necessity of doing evil, and that at the cost of far more labour than God exacts from His servants. And it

Targum.  
Jer. xxxix.  
7, marg.  
S. Hieron.  
in Esai. 15.

Job xxxvi.  
8.  
Jer. xxxvii.  
2.

C.

A.  
Hugo Card.

2 Cor. iv. 4.

Rom. i. 21.

Isa. lix. 2.

Ay.

S. Greg.

Naz.

Z.

Hugo Card.

S. Chrysost.



Agellius.

is well added, *there was none to help them*, none of the allies to whom Zedekiah looked, none of the false gods to whom his subjects prayed; for while we have CHRIST and His holy Angels to aid us in all things righteous, the devil and his agents, after luring men into sin, leave all the toil of it to them, as well as the remorse and punishment to come. Wherefore it is truly said, "The wages of sin is death." But when it is added, *there was none to help them*, that held good only so long as they continued to sit and keep silence. The moment they knelt in prayer, a Helper came:

S. Albertus Magnus.

13 So when they cried unto the LORD in their trouble: he delivered them out of their distress.

14 For he brought them out of darkness, and out of the shadow of death: and brake their bonds in sunder.

15 O that men would therefore praise the LORD for his goodness: and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men!

D. C.  
Isa. xlii. 7.S. Luke i.  
79.C.  
Hugo Card.

For this cause was He born, and came into the world, "to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house," "to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet unto the way of peace." And this He fulfilled in that He *brought*, leading with His own Hand, and sending no messenger in His stead, men *out of darkness* into the clear light and true knowledge of God, out of the *shadow of death*, by showing them the glory of a holy life, and *brake*, not merely loosed, but *brake*, with speedy deliverance and irresistible might, *their bonds asunder*, by destroying the tyranny of Satan, and giving men instant power against evil habit, as he did to Levi the publican, who rose up at once at His call, and left everything behind to follow Him. Wherefore here follows the second exhortation to thanksgiving for so great benefits; and because of the magnitude of them, the Psalmist returns to amplify further what he has already spoken, and adds:

16 For he hath broken the gates of brass: and smitten the bars of iron in sunder.

Here we are taught that the obstacles in His way were no small ones. No slight doors, no slender cords held the captives prisoned, but *gates of brass*, and *bars of iron*. The use of these same words in describing the victorious progress of Cyrus, of whom the LORD saith, "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight, I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron," shows us

Isa. xlv. 2.



that the primary reference here is to the strong fortifications of those great Eastern cities which formed the strength of the Babylonian empire, seemingly impregnable, but yet doomed to fall before an invader.<sup>1</sup> And the citation (as it Schnurrer. probably is) of the passage in Isaiah here, makes in favour of the view that this Psalm was composed in honour of the decree of Cyrus in favour of the Jews. The favourite interpretation of the passage is that which has fixed this Psalm for the Matins of Easter Eve in the Ambrosian Use; namely, that it tells of the victory over Death and Hell wrought by the Passion and Resurrection of CHRIST, and of His bearing away with Him to Paradise the once imprisoned Patriarchs. And this idea is repeated in more than one hymn, as thus :

Solus ululet Tartarus  
Raptâ prædâ vacuus,  
Fractos vectes et ferrea  
Strata ploret mœnia,  
Quæ subruit Rex gloriæ  
Cum laude victoriæ.

S. Pet. Dam.  
The Hymn,  
Paschalis  
festi  
gaudium.

Let Tartarus alone lament,  
Spoiled of the booty from it rent,  
For broken bars complain in woe,  
And iron ramparts levelled low,  
Which, in His victory renowned,  
The King of Glory cast to ground.

The simile is often heightened by reference to the history of Judg. xvi. 3. Samson ending his sleep at Gaza by carrying off the gates, posts, and bars of the city to the hill before Hebron.

Applying the words to the deliverance of the soul from sin, Ricard.  
Victorin. a devout writer observes that we block the entrance of a passage with gates, and make these gates fast with bars, which severally denote, therefore, contradiction and rebellion, the former brazen as being pertinacious, the other of iron, as bold and daring. Another will have it that the gates of brass are evil habits, and the bars of iron the promptings of the devil, which keep those gates fast, lest we should go free. Hugo Card.

17 Foolish men are plagued for their offence : and because of their wickedness.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Virgil's picture of the shrine of War :

Sunt geminæ belli portæ (sic  
nomine dicunt,) (sic)  
Religione sacræ, et sævi for-  
midine Martis,  
Centum ærei claudunt vectes  
æternaque ferri  
Robora.

There are twin gates of war (so  
runs their name,) (so)  
Hallowed by faith and dread of  
cruel Mars,  
A hundred brazen barriers close  
them up,  
And iron's strength enduring.  
Æn. vii. 607.



18 Their soul abhorred all manner of meat : and they were even hard at death's door.

19 So when they cried unto the LORD in their trouble : he delivered them out of their distress.

De Muis.

Job xxxiii.  
9, 16, 17.

S. John v.  
14.

1 Cor. xi. 29.

L.

A.

S. Greg.  
Nyss.

Ay.

Num. xxi. 8.

Here in the third place the Psalmist sets down those on whom God sends sickness, often fatal, as a punishment for sin; and especially the sin of spiritual pride and self-consciousness. Thus Elihu speaks, teaching that it is idle to resist God, for those who say, "I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me," find that God, "that He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man, He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing with the sword; he is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain, so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat; yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers." And in like manner, when the LORD had healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, and found him afterwards in the Temple, He said unto him, "Behold, thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee." So too, we are warned by the Apostle that such as treat the Divine Food of CHRIST's Body and Blood with irreverence, are punished with incapacity to eat those carnal dainties which they prefer. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the LORD's Body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." But the LXX. and Vulgate, reading in the first clause of v. 17, *He took them out of the way of their iniquity*,<sup>1</sup> do not lend themselves altogether to this exposition; though the suggested meaning that He takes them into His hands for the purpose of chastising them, comes very nearly to the same thing, though the more usual interpretation accepts the words as speaking directly of God's merciful purpose. The third kind of temptation is here put before us, namely, weariness and loathing of good. For after a man has come from ignorance to truth, from error to the Way, from famine of wisdom to the word of faith, and has overcome all difficulties, so that he might live in peace, there yet remains weariness, so that he can take no delight in reading or in prayer. And therefore it is said, *all manner of meats*, because men get tired of the quiet and decorum of holiness, and long for something different, by way of change; just as Adam turned from all the trees of the garden to the one forbidden fruit, and as the Israelites rejected the manna, saying, "Our soul loatheth this light bread;" despite the

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps reading לְמַעַן, or לְמַעַן, instead of לְמַעַן. There are several other conjectures offered by the elder Hebraists.



tradition—that it supplied all lack of other food, because it tasted to each as his favourite dainty “and serving to the appetite of the eater, tempered itself to every man’s liking.” And observe that there are three kinds of spiritual food which foolish men loathe, the Word of God, the Body of CHRIST, and good works, because their palate is dulled, tainted, and diseased through sin, so that they can relish only the highly-seasoned dishes of the evil one, avarice, luxury, pride, and the like.

Yet even for this disorder of the soul there is a physician, and once again the LORD heard and delivered; for

20 He sent his word and healed them : and they were saved from their destruction.

21 O that men would therefore praise the LORD for his goodness : and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men.

They refer the primary meaning of this clause to such examples of Divine power put forth in healing as that of the brazen serpent, “for it was neither herb, nor mollifying plaister, that restored them to health, but Thy word, O LORD, which healeth all things.” And S. Peter Chrysologus compares the mere spoken word wherewith CHRIST the LORD healed the centurion’s servant, as illustrating the verse. But the highest interpretation of all, and that which has been most generally followed by the Fathers, is to see here the mission and Incarnation of the Eternal SON, the WORD of the FATHER, at once the Great Physician and the salutary Food of a dying world. And a later commentator very happily cites here a further portion of that address of Elihu, wherein he describes God’s visitation by sickness, and goes on to paint His mode of curing the wound He has inflicted: “If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man His uprightness: then He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child’s: he shall return to the days of his youth: he shall pray unto God, and He will be favourable unto him: and he shall see His face with joy: for He will render unto man His righteousness.” And that healing from destruction which God the WORD bestowed when He walked on earth, He still vouchsafes by the word of His preachers, whom He empowers to pour into the soul’s wounds the wine of rebuke and the oil of consolation.

*O that men, &c.* Nowhere does this joyous verse chime in more fitly than here, where we are told of health bestowed, of life restored, above all, the life of the spirit. No work makes God more loved than the redemption of mankind, for this is the sum of all His goodness and wonders, not merely

Wisd. xvi.  
21.  
Hugo Card.  
Deut. viii. 3.  
S. John vi.  
51; iv. 34.

L.  
Numb. xxi.  
9.  
Wisd. xvi.  
12.  
Serm. xv.  
Origen.  
S. Athanas.  
ad Marcell.  
S. Greg.  
Nyss.  
Haymo, &c.

De Muis.

Job xxxiii.  
23.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Hugo Card.

L.



because of the redemption itself, but the manner of it, by the Incarnation and Passion of the Son of God, that God became Man for men, that He, one and the same, is Physician and medicine, SAVIOUR and salvation, Shepherd and pasture, Redeemer and redemption, and the ransom too, the price of that redemption.

22 That they would offer unto him the sacrifice of thanksgiving : and tell out his works with gladness !

Theodoret.

De Muls.

Jonah ii. 7.

Hugo Card.

Rom. xii. 1.

Ps. ii. 17.

Eccius.

xxxiv. 2.

Ps. i. 23.

C.

A.

In the translation of Aquila, the phrase for *thanksgiving* is *Sacrifice of Eucharist*, (*θυσια εὐχαριστίας*), whence the Greek Fathers expound this place as a prayer for the abolition of the carnal sacrifices of the Law, and the substitution for them of the unbloody oblation of the Gospel. The immediate reference in the text seems to limit the verse to the newly-recovered patients, for whom the Psalmist prays that they may not fail to perform the pledges they made to God when they called on Him for help; according to those words of the rescued Prophet, "When my soul fainted in me, I remembered the LORD; and my prayer came in unto Thee, into Thy holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy; but I will sacrifice to Thee with the voice of thanksgiving, I will pay that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD." There are many spiritual sacrifices which Christians may offer in union with that one Oblation; that of our own flesh, by fasting and mortification; as it is written, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice;" that of our spirit, by contrition, for "the sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;" of our possessions, by almsgiving, for "He that giveth alms sacrificeth praise;" of our mouths, in prayer, for "whoso offereth Me thanks and praise, he honoureth Me." It is added, *tell out His works*, because they are to let other sick men know the marvellous power of their Physician, Who has given them the true medicine for their souls, and that *with gladness*, because the coldness and torpor of their sometime indifference has passed away, and they are whole again, rejoicing in the LORD.

23 They that go down to the sea in ships : and occupy their business in great waters ;

24 These men see the works of the LORD : and his wonders in the deep.

A.

Here is the fourth reason for praising God, because He delivers mariners from the perils of the sea; and there may be a literal reference, as already noted, to the experience of some of the Jewish exiles, making their way homeward from the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea; so that the view of some Greek Fathers, that the whole description is but an allegory of deliverance from the troubles of captivity, and the return

Theodoret.  
S. Chrysost.



to the haven of the native land of the voyagers, need hardly be dwelt on. The word *business* seems here taken in its widest sense, including fishing, trading, and the like, as well as the management of vessels by the sailors. And, as was to be expected, the graphic touches of the picture have had their fruit in an abundant crop of allegorical interpretation. First may stand that which sees here the Apostles and other great teachers, coming down from the heights of contemplation to the stormy and bitter sea of active labour amongst unrestful sinners, (of which their descent from the Mount of Transfiguration to the plain of the demoniac was a type,) and that *in ships*, each labouring in some one part of the Church, each, too, trusting in the Cross of CHRIST, not afraid to "commit their lives to a small piece of wood," for they, "passing the rough sea in a weak vessel are saved; for blessed is the wood whereby righteousness cometh," a ship whereof CHRIST is the Pilot; they labour for Him, and occupy their business in the *great waters* of many nations, of fierce persecutions, in the copious floods of Baptism, in the abundant tears of penitence, and see the *works of the Lord* in the conversion of souls, *His wonders in the deep* of those buried in sin, but now restored by grace, in the deep sayings of that Holy Writ which is their commission. And there appears to be a very curious Rabbinical tradition which makes in favour of this first exposition. It is to the effect that the Word of God, mentioned in the twentieth verse, is some messenger or preacher whom He will send, and who will be honoured when he does come, because he will heal and deliver from their plagues all who believe in him; but as they will be few, and of dull understanding, and fishers by trade, whose business is in the waters, it is said that He will heal them, so that these very persons will be chosen to see the work of God, for which their mental slowness seemed to unfit them. A second exposition takes the *ships* to be the Religious Life, whereby men glide safely over the stormy billows of the world; but a yet more ingenious one sees in them a type of penitence, narrow as they are at stem and stern, but wide in the middle, as repentance is harder for children and old persons, at the beginning and close of life, than for those of middle age; it receives persons of all ranks and conditions, and characters; it is subject to great perils, which may be escaped by starting cargo overboard, by stopping leaks, by pumping out water, by casting anchor. And a fourth view is, that a ship is an emblem of a righteous soul, for the subjoined reasons: As a ship is made of light materials, which float easily, so a holy soul does not burden itself with worldly fardels, but keeps the world beneath it. It sails on to its haven, as the soul makes pilgrimage to Paradise. It is laden with valuable merchandise, the soul with grace and virtues bestowed by God. It is watertight and closed below, but open above, as the soul ought to be impervious to the world, and hide its own good works

B.

Haymo.  
Honorius.

C.

Wisd. xiv.  
5, 7.  
S. Bonaventura.S. Bruno  
Carth.Nebulensis.  
L.

C.

Hugo Card.

Holkot, Sap.  
Lect. v. 64.

Berchorius.



therefrom, but open to heaven with affection and desire. It is narrow at the ends, wide in the middle, as the soul is austere and self-denying to itself, but broad in its charity for others. It is constantly moved by the waves, and easily impelled by the wind, and so the devout soul progresses through toil and adversity, under the inspiration of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD. Yet again, there are sinners who, like Jonah, fleeing from the face of God, go down to the sea, to the cares and pleasures of the world, away from the solid land of humility, quiet, and grace. They occupy themselves in many waters, in needless toils and excessive pleasures, and yet even there God does not leave them, but causes them to see His works and wonders even in the deep of their sins, by giving them timely and sufficient warnings, and alarming them with fear of the abyss.

Le Blanc.

25 For at his word the stormy wind ariseth :  
which lifteth up the waves thereof.

26 They are carried up to the heaven, and down  
again to the deep : their soul melteth away because  
of the trouble.

There are many similar passages in the poets, of which one of the briefest will suffice as an example :

Virg. *Æn.*  
iii. 564.

Tollimur in cœlum curvato gurgite, et iidem  
Subductâ ad manes imos descendimus undâ.

Raised to the sky upon the curving wave,  
We sink with it to ocean's lowest grave.

Honorius.

P.

They take the allegorical sense variously. And first; the trials and persecutions which burst upon the Church, amidst which the loftiest examples of holiness and constancy in the martyrs, the lowest proofs of timidity and self-seeking, and even of sin and apostasy, might be observed simultaneously in the Church, while outside of it, in the very same way, some of the heathens, fired with hate against the Cross, rose in their blasphemy against heaven itself, and others, touched by the grace of God, humbled themselves, like the gaoler of Philippi, in the lowest humility of confession at the feet of those they had before oppressed. A very curious interpretation, limiting both phrases to the Martyrs, is, that they were *carried up to the heavens* when brought before kings and rulers in public to trial, and *down again to the deep* when thrust into dungeons and chains. Secondly; S. Augustine understands the words as referring to prelates and other rulers of the Church, alternating in boldness and timidity, in confidence and despair, in contemplation and action, while another, adopting a part of this typology, explains the whole passage of the storms and vacillations of thought within the

Hugo Card.

B.

A.

C.



hearts of all men, now elated, and now despairing, till their soul melteth away because of the trouble and anxiety.

27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man : and are at their wit's end.

28 So when they cry unto the LORD in their trouble : he delivereth them out of their distress.

These words are taken by the expositors as marking the effects of passion, such as the vacillation of judgment, all violent disturbance of the balance of mind, over-eagerness in curiosity, the indulgence of desire, of anger, of revenge. Or, on the other hand, in a good sense, they may denote such as are shaken and detached from the sins in which they once, as it were, stood rooted, when they have become full of the new wine of the HOLY GHOST, which excites them to a total change, to abandonment of their own carnal wisdom, and to reliance on God alone. *Are at their wits' end.* This phrase, common to both the English versions, is far weaker than the Hebrew idiom, faithfully preserved by LXX. and Vulgate, *Their wisdom is swallowed up*, words denoting their confusion of mind in the face of peril, which brings out the true faculties of each man into strong relief, so that such as appeared to be wise in time of quiet and security, now lose their head, and are proved incompetent. Or, in that better sense already mentioned, their carnal wisdom is swallowed up by the wisdom of God, as the rod of Moses swallowed up the rods of the magicians of Egypt. This picture also is common in the Latin poets. One example will, as before, suffice :

Nil ratio, et usus audet in magnis malis ;  
Tenet horror artus, omnis officio stupet  
Navita relicto, remus effugit manus.

L.  
Hugo Card.  
Philip de la  
Grève.  
Honorius.

Reason and wont dare nought in mighty ill,  
Dread grasps the limbs, and the dazed sailor shrinks  
From every task, the oar escapes his hands.

A.  
C.  
Honorius.

*So when they cry, &c.* A Basque proverb says, "Let him Kay, who knows not how to pray, go to sea." They cry, not merely for safety, but for the wisdom of God to replace their own drunkenness, for calmness of judgment, and for the cessation of troubles and persecutions in the Church. They cry, that if they have forgotten Him while all seemed safe and prosperous, He may not forget them in peril :

JESU, bless our slender boat,  
By the current swept along ;  
Loud its threatenings, let them not  
Drown the murmur of a song  
Breathed Thy mercy to implore,  
Where these troubled waters roar.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
Words-  
worth.



SAVIOUR, for our warning seen,  
 Bleeding on that precious Rood,  
 If, while through the meadows green  
 Gently wound the peaceful flood,  
 We forgot Thee, do not Thou  
 Disregard Thy suppliants now.

Guide our bark among the waves,  
 Through the rocks our passage smooth,  
 Where the whirlpool frets and raves,  
 Let Thy love its anger soothe ;  
 All our hope is placed in Thee,  
 Miserere Domine!

29 For he maketh the storm to cease : so that the waves thereof are still.

30 Then are they glad, because they are at rest : and so he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be.

31 O that men would therefore praise the LORD for his goodness : and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men !

Haymo.  
 S. Bruno  
 Carth.

The Vulgate has kept much more exactly and happily to the original, which runs : *He stayed the tempest into a gentle breeze, and the waves thereof were silent.* And they tell us that God does this whenever He quells the violence of diabolic temptation and persecution, and sends in its stead the tender grace of the HOLY GHOST, stilling all the tumult of the world and the wild commotions of the heart of man.

Hugo Card. Again ; they remind us of how often the power of the torments inflicted on the Martyrs was stayed, so that they felt no pain on the rack or amidst the flames, because God dealt with them (save in the matter of preserving the life of their bodies) as He did with the Three Children, when He "made the midst of the furnace as it had been a moist whistling wind, so that the fire touched them not at all, neither hurt

Song of  
 Three Child.  
 27.

S. Chrysost.  
 S. Greg. M.

Ay.

nor troubled them." Once more ; He stayed the rage of the heathen against the Gospel, by the might of the preachers of the Word, and converted their fierce passion into calm zeal, as He did with Saul of Tarsus, when his persecuting temper was changed into burning love for souls ; for then, as on the Lake of Gennesaret, Jesus "arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm." He does the like too, when after bringing men through the storm of unwilling conversion, He grants them spiritual peace, following on repentance and amendment. *Then are they glad*, because the fierce billows *are at rest*, and so He makes them enter into the *haven of their desire*. What that haven is, they describe

S. Matt.  
 viii. 26.

B.

S. Chrysost.

Arnobius.

variously. One takes it to be the calm of prayer ; another the Cross ; a third the Church. The most frequent expo-



sition of any is, that it denotes tranquillity of soul; another again takes it of everlasting salvation, or of the Heavenly Country, reminding us that hell, depicted as the bottomless abyss, has no haven where anchor may be cast; but best of all is that simplest and fullest view which tells us that CHRIST is Himself the harbour of safety for all tempest-tossed souls; Pseudo-Hieron. W.

Ipseque Portitor, ipseque Portus.

Bernard.  
Cluniac.  
Rhythmus.

"the Pilot and the Haven," as the Cluniac calls Him.

*O that men, &c.* For the fourth time the cry of thanksgiving goes up, and on this occasion with a twofold force; because the previous verses tell us of the total failure of human wisdom, and the gladness of unexpected deliverance from imminent peril. A.

Safe home, safe home in port!  
Rent cordage, shattered deck,  
Torn sails, provisions short,  
And only not a wreck;  
But oh! the joy upon the shore,  
To tell our voyage-perils o'er!

S. Joseph  
Hymnograph.

32 That they would exalt him also in the congregation of the people: and praise him in the seat of the elders!

The Chaldee paraphrases the former of these clauses as denoting the full assembly of the children of Israel, and the latter as the chair of the wise men, that is, the Sanhedrim, or sacred council. The more usual Christian exposition is nearly identical, for it takes the terms as signifying the laity and clergy. There are, however, two further comments; one, that the first half of the verse refers to the Gentile Church, and the second to the Jewish Synagogue, its elder in the knowledge of God. Cardinal Hugo, dealing in his wonted fashion heavy blows at the secularity and nepotism of his time, draws another lesson from the Vulgate wording, *Church of the commons* (ecclesia plebis), and *stall of the elders* (cathedra seniorum), and bids us note that the Psalmist speaks of the *commons*, but says nothing of *princes*, because they are wont to exalt themselves instead of God, and that he speaks of the stall of the *elders*, because mere boys ought not to be promoted to cathedral dignities. C.  
B.  
Hugo Card.

33 Who turneth the floods into a wilderness: and drieth up the water-springs.

34 A fruitful land maketh he barren: for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.

At this point the tone and character of the Psalm changes, Bellarmine.



- Agellius. and from the contrast between the sufferings of men and God's mercy in deliverance, the singer passes to the praise of the providential government of the world, and of the manner in which the LORD exercises His omnipotence by changing the condition of things, in proof of His sole lordship and mastery. And the first example given has most probably a direct reference to the destruction of the cities of the plain, so precisely does it answer to the twofold description of the surrounding country before and after that terrible visitation: "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest to Zoar." Gen. xiii. 10.
- Deut. xxix. 23. Later, we read: "The whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim."
- S. Basil. M. The mystical interpretation here usually found is the rejection of the Jewish people, the drying up of the springs of spiritual grace, the disappearance of the fruit of good works, the cessation of prophecy, the overthrow of their national polity, the abolition of the Mosaic worship; and that because of the guilt of the Scribes and Pharisees. For *barren* the literal rendering is *saltiness*, A. V. marg., or *salt-marsh*, LXX. Ezek. xlvii. 11. *ἄλμη*, Vulg. *salsuginem*; and one commentator tells us that this epithet here implies that the punishment of the Jews is meant as a condiment for our souls, to correct their folly and guard them from decay. Honorius.
- Hugo Card. We are justly reminded by another that such judgments have not fallen upon the Jews alone, but that Christian Churches too have had their candlestick removed. Cocceius.
- Jer. ii. 13. We know how Persia, once rich in Martyrs, how Egypt, the fruitful mother of ascetic saints, how Asia Minor, formerly diademed with a starry crown of famous Churches, have all bowed before the Koran; how the Church of Libya and Mauritania has left no trace behind; how the great Nestorian community, whose missions once stretched from Siberia to Ceylon, from Antioch to Pekin, has dwindled to a few scattered families; how the sun of the Faith in Japan set in blood; how Holland, and Scandinavia, and much of Germany, and Switzerland, and Scotland, have "forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water," that cannot retain the great doctrines of the Christian Faith, but pass, by inevitable steps, from denial of the Church, to denial of her Founder; from insulting the Bride, to crucifying the Bridegroom afresh, and putting Him to open shame. And none can read the ecclesiastical history of these latter countries for the period immediately preceding the religious convulsion of the sixteenth century, without confessing that it was indeed *for the wickedness of them that dwell therein* that God sent upon them that terrible disaster.



35 Again, he maketh the wilderness a standing water : and water-springs of a dry ground.

36 And there he setteth the hungry : that they may build them a city to dwell in ;

37 That they may sow their lands, and plant vineyards : to yield them fruits of increase.

Here we have the other side of the picture, the calling of the Gentiles, and the spread of the knowledge of God throughout the earth, as the waters cover the sea. It is not impossible that the literal reference may be to the resettlement of Canaan by the returning Jews, when the long deserted fields were again brought under tillage, the tanks, reservoirs, cisterns, conduits, and general system of irrigation put once more into working order, and, above all, Jerusalem itself rebuilt. And this would seem to square with the primary and literal sense of certain prophecies of Isaiah. A.  
Isa. xi. 9.  
Agellius. Mystically, they tell us that the *standing waters* are the founts of Baptism, filled with calm pools for the laver of regeneration, or else resident pastors, as distinguished from the *water-springs*, which are the itinerant preachers of righteousness who go forth into heathen lands, *dry ground*, where the rain of doctrine is unknown ; that the *city* is the Church, given as a home to them that hungered and thirsted after righteousness, where they may sow the land with the seed of the Word of God, and plant the vineyards of the local Churches, while they are engaged in raising up the walls of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Another interpretation, not very different, sees in the *standing water* Holy Scripture, made over to the Gentiles as a vast reservoir of spiritual wisdom, whence the *springs*, the preachers and expounders, derive those waters wherewith they irrigate the gardens of the Church, the souls of the faithful. Yet again, it is explained, but less happily, of floods of penitential tears, and the whole passage is accommodated, by more than one writer, to the circumstances of the Religious Life. C.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.  
Hugo Card.

38 He blesseth them, so that they multiply exceedingly : and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

They *multiply exceedingly* in holiness and good works, and when this is the case with the teachers and pastors of the flock, God does not suffer their *cattle*, that is, those simple and less cultivated souls to which they minister, to be made a prey of by heretical teachers, whose surest wile to lead the uneducated astray is to point out the shortcomings of their lawful pastors. He does not suffer them to *decrease* ; nay, He makes them to increase more than any others, for "hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that C.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.  
D. C.  
S. James II.  
5.  
1 Cor. i. 26.



Pseudo-  
Hieron.

love Him?" "And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen." *He hath not made them less*, because persons of no great ability are not worse off under the Gospel than they were under the sects of philosophy, but better, for God has a particular care for those on whom men look down, and finds work and dignity for them in His Church, because the heart is mightier than the brain, and love greater than faith, and hope, and wisdom. So we are taught by the beautiful legend of the eloquent Bishop, who doubted if a poor beggar who sat at the foot of the pulpit could understand the periods wherewith the preacher held and swayed the minds of his congregation, but who was instructed in a vision at night that he owed his very power, and the success which followed its exercise, to the beggar's intercessory prayer on his behalf, which had gone up and been accepted at the throne of God.

39 And again, when they are minished and brought low : through oppression, through any plague, or trouble ;

40 Though he suffer them to be evil intreated through tyrants : and let them wander out of the way in the wilderness ;

41 Yet helpeth he the poor out of misery : and maketh him households like a flock of sheep.

- Z. After the Christian Church had been multiplied exceedingly from the Twelve and the Seventy into vast numbers of disciples, it began to be *minished and brought low* in two ways ; first, by persecution thinning the ranks sorely with martyrdom and with apostasies ; and next, by internal heresies, schisms, and divisions ; which sometimes, as in the days of Arian success, have reduced the Church to a few, and will do so again in the last days, during the manifestation of Antichrist. In periods of strife and unbelief such as these,
- Ay. *He poureth contempt on princes*, (A.V., LXX., Vulg.) because revolt against justly constituted authority, whether in Church or State, simply because it is authority, is one of the marks of the schismatic temper, and always goes hand in hand with false doctrine, though the rulers of the Church may indeed have earned that contempt by their luxury and worldliness. Or, again, these words may bear a meaning closer to that of the Prayer-Book version, and tell us of the manner in which God laughs to scorn the attempts of tyrants to uproot and extirpate His Church. Several of the commentators, while keeping with sufficient closeness to the main scope of this exposition, take the passage not as immediately descriptive of the Church weakened by heresy, but of the heretics themselves considered apart, and called *few*.
- A. Genebrardus.
- Hugo Card. L.
- A. C.



(Vulg.) not because of actual paucity of numbers, but because of their spiritual unimportance as compared with the wide extent of the Catholic Church (an interpretation which holds good even for these days.) And in that case the contempt poured on their princes will denote the constant multiplication of schisms from the sects founded by heresiarchs, whose influence is inadequate to retain permanent hold over their disciples; and to the low esteem in which the ministers of all such sects are sooner or later held by their flocks, who quickly learn that they have no Divine commission, and may therefore be treated as man's servants, not as God's ambassadors, inasmuch as by their departure from Catholic unity and tradition, and by their conflicting interpretation of Scripture, they cannot serve as leaders to the Land of Promise, but only *wander out of the way in the wilderness*. And in this wise, "He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged: He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty." Yet even in such times of rebuke and blasphemy, God does not forget His suffering people, but makes the very prevalence of error a lesson of warning to them, that they may desire the true riches, after having had some experience of the *poverty* of schism, its few and feeble tenets, its meagre worship, its lack of depth and fervour; and then He makes their *families like a flock*, (A. V., S. Hieron,) because while His pastors sorrowfully look at the diminished number of the faithful, and lamenting over the seceders, say, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us;" He answers on the other hand in words of encouragement, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, and one shepherd." Thus, the conversion of Northern Europe repaired the breach made by the progress of Islam in Asia; thus, the missionary successes and the great Religious Houses of the tenth century counterbalanced the sin and ignorance of that truly Dark Age; thus the Martyrs who died on the Cross in Japan made reparation to their Lord for the sin of the European traders who trod that Cross under foot, that they might have licence to traffic with the heathen.

Two other expositions of the passage may be cited. One is, that it is to a great extent a brief recapitulation of what went before, and describes the overthrow of the Jews by the Romans, and the substitution of the Gentiles in their stead as the spiritual children of God. The other sees in it the spread of the Religious Life, despite the fewness, obscurity, and poverty of its followers; nay, the manner in which that very poverty served as the strength of the cloister, and multiplied Houses of many a famous Order throughout the wide pastures of the Church.

Haymo.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.

C.  
R.

Job xli. 20.

R.

1 S. John ii.

19.

S. John x.

16.

Honorius.

Hugo Card.



42 The righteous will consider this, and rejoice : and the mouth of all wickedness shall be stopped.

43 Whoso is wise will ponder these things : and they shall understand the loving-kindness of the LORD.

C. The Psalmist, after describing the proud abettors of heresy, now returns to the lowly Catholics, whom in their poverty God, leaving the princes of the sects to their hunger, refreshes with heavenly aid. And the preachers of righteousness, seeing the conversion of the nations brought about in this wise, rejoice, whereas the voice of unbelief, Jewish, sectarian, and infidel, is silenced, because unable to resist the mighty advance of the Word of the LORD.

Honorius.

C. *Whoso is wise will ponder these things*, and prefer to be ranked amongst the poor of CHRIST, than amongst the princes of the sects, and will rather choose to knock at the door of the King of Heaven than teach words which do hurt. And so humbling themselves *they will understand*, not their own merits, strength, or power, but that whatever good they possess is bestowed on them by *the mercies of the Lord*, Who led the wanderers into the right way ; and fed the hungry ; loosed and freed him who struggled against the force of sin, and was bound in the chains of habit ; Who, sending the medicine of His WORD, healed him who turned away from the Word of GOD and was at the point of death through weariness ; Who calmed the sea and brought into the haven of rest him that was in peril amidst wrecks and storms, and set him amongst a lowly people, that He might bring His sheep into the fold of Paradise. He who remembers and understands all this is *wise*, though he may not have the learning of this world, and for this cause the LORD Himself hath said, " I thank Thee, O FATHER, LORD of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes ; even so, FATHER ; for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

D. C.

S. Luke' x.  
21.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, the Most Highest ; glory be to the SON, the WORD sent to heal us, and save us from destruction ; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the gentle wind which stilleth the tempest of our souls.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

Ludolph.

We confess Thy mercies, O LORD, which Thou constantly displayest towards our need, beseeching Thee, that Thou, Who art exalted in the Churches, and sittest at the right hand of the FATHER on His throne, mayest grant us to understand and ponder the secret of such great compassion. (5.)



Deliver us, O LORD, out of our distress, and feed the hunger of our souls with the fatness of Thy Word, and shine with Thy clear light on them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death. (11.) Mozarabic.

Let us confess unto Thee, O LORD, Thy mercies, where- with Thou savest us from destruction, and gathering us out of the lands of error, unitest us with the bond of charity in the harmony of faith. (11.) Mozarabic.

Send Thy Word, O LORD, and heal us, and deliver us from the destruction to which we are urged forward by the weight of our sins; that as we bear in mind that we have been made by the operation of Thy Word, so we may be made anew by His power. Hear Thou us when we are in trouble and call upon Thee, and grant us freedom from our perilous distress; that praise may go up to Thee from our confession, and we may take delight in telling Thy wondrous works before the children of men. (11.) Mozarabic.

Our LORD JESUS CHRIST Thy SON, Who alone ruling all things by the Word of His power, and bearing all the scars of the Cross, brake the iron bars, and smote in pieces the fastenings of the gates of brass, descended to the depths of Hell, shone with the brightness of light unknown on them that sat in the shadow of death, and, Sun of Righteousness, proceeding with quickened Body from the grave, wondrously enlightened our darkness with His rays. (11.) Missale  
Mozarabic.  
Easter Eve.

At Thy command, O LORD, let the waves of the storms of our life be silent, and stay Thou our tempest with a breeze of calm and gladness, that guided by Thee as Pilot into the haven of salvation, we may give thanks unto Thee for the works of Thy mercy. (1.) D. C.

## PSALM CVIII.

TITLE. A Song or Psalm of David.

### ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, exalted above the heavens, extends His glory over all lands. The Voice of one that feareth GOD. The Voice of the Church at the placing over.<sup>1</sup> And a confession made amongst the people at deliverance, or the Voice of any that feareth.

VEN. BEDÆ. *Song* refers to the contemplation of Divine things, *Psalm* to actual works, which, however, accord with Divine commands, which he testifies himself in the first verse: *I will sing*

<sup>1</sup> *Ad superpositionem.* Perhaps it means the enthroning of CHRIST as King.



*and give praise to the Lord.* *David*, moreover, signifies CHRIST the King, Who is to speak in this Psalm.

Throughout the whole Psalm the LORD speaks. In the first place He gives thanks to the FATHER, because after the triumph of His Passion He rose again unto everlasting glory: *O God, my heart is ready.* Secondly, He humbles Himself in His Manhood, wherein He nevertheless displays the power of His own majesty, that thou mayest understand that there are truly two Natures in the one Person of CHRIST the LORD: *That Thy beloved may be delivered.* It is however to be observed that the 107th (108) Psalm is made up of the closing portions of two other Psalms; because the LORD by His Passion and Resurrection joined to Himself two peoples in one faith, made them fruitful with one grace of the SPIRIT, lifted them up with the same gift of everlasting life. The number one hundred denotes the life which is in the right hand, seven denotes the HOLY GHOST. And these numbers are suitably conjoined in this Psalm, made one out of two, because only spiritual persons merit to receive life everlasting.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, when he was ready with glory for the ministry and psalmody of the House of the LORD. And concerning the calling of the Gentiles.

EUSEBIUS OF CESAREA. The calling of the Gentiles.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm setting forth Providence with a song.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* Saturday: Matins.

*Ambrosian.* Friday of Second Week: III. Nocturn.

*Parisian.* Thursday: Lauds.

*Lyons.* Saturday: III. Nocturn.

*Quignon.* Thursday: Terce.

#### ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* } I will give great thanks unto the LORD \* with my  
*Monastic.* } mouth.  
*Lyons.*

*Ambrosian.* As preceding Psalm.

*Parisian.* My heart is ready, O GOD; I will arise early, \* I will give thanks unto Thee, O LORD.

*Mozarabic.* I will arise early, \* and will give thanks unto the LORD.

This Psalm, being merely a cento, made up of Ps. lvii. 7—11, and lx. 5—12, has been already treated in those two places, so that it remains to add here only a very few additional comments.

1 O God, my heart is ready, my heart is ready:  
I will sing and give praise with the best member  
that I have.

C. The words are spoken by the LORD JESUS, Who alone can truly say with this double repetition, *My heart is ready*, because He, being free from all taint of sin, is ever in perfect conformity with His FATHER's will, and able to praise Him



perfectly in word and act ; which, however, we also can do, when our sins are remitted through His bounty. *My heart is ready*, for My will is prepared to undergo the Passion for the salvation of mankind, and that not by force or compulsion, but freely and voluntarily. I, the Shepherd, will die for My sheep ; and not with grief, but with cheerfulness ; and then *I will give praise with My glory*, (A.V., LXX., Vulg.) in the brightness of My Resurrection, for which I am ready, as I was ready for the Passion which preceded it.

Honorius.

Hugo Card.

2 Awake, thou lute, and harp : I myself will awake right early.

Here the FATHER answers the call of the SON, or else the SON Himself, in His Godhead, addresses His human Body. In the former view the soul of CHRIST is compared to the *psaltery*, (LXX., Vulg.) the sound of which comes from above, and His Body to the *harp*, whose strings are vibrated from below. In the latter, the two epithets are applied to different aspects of CHRIST's humanity, as the *psaltery*, with its ten strings, denotes His holiness of life in perfect fulfilment of the precepts of the moral law, while the *harp* is taken as typifying His sufferings ; or, as another will have it, the *psaltery* is the dogmatic teaching of the Gospel as to divine mysteries, the harp its moral precepts, and the example of CHRIST's life and Passion. And to this call, the SON answers, *I myself will awake right early*. And that not merely in reference to the Resurrection before the dawn, as they mostly take it, but because CHRIST, as the Sun of Righteousness, ever arises on the Christian soul, so that there is never night there, but always day.

C.

Ay.

Pseudo-Hieron.

3 I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the people : I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.

*I will give thanks*, (confitebor) denoting personal speech. CHRIST declares that He will give thanks amongst the *people*, because He sojourned in bodily presence amongst the Jews : *I will play* (psallam) *among the nations*, tells us that He dealt not in this direct fashion with the Gentiles, but made the music of His Gospel audible to them by His instruments, the Apostles : and again, while the Jews merely listened to His words, the Gentiles carried them out in action.

C,

D. C.

B.

4 For thy mercy is greater than the heavens : and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.

His mercy is *greater than the heavens*, because it is only by His sustaining grace that the Angels themselves are pre-

C.



served in holiness and security ; His truth *reacheth unto the clouds*, far beneath those heavens, because He intrusts the doctrines of His revelation to the preachers of the Word, that they may pour them down in rain upon the earth, to make it fruitful in the harvest of souls. And CHRIST, Who is the FATHER's mercy and truth, once lower than the Angels in His humiliation, is now greater than them all in majesty, and hath come to His clouds, the Apostles, to fill them with all divine mysteries. His mercy, in salvation, exceeds the deservings of the righteous ; His truth, in punishing, awaits those who abide in wilful darkness.

Honorius.

Hugo Card.

5 Set up thyself, O God, above the heavens : and thy glory above all the earth.

6 That thy beloved may be delivered : let thy right hand save them, and hear thou me.

It is not only a prayer for the glorification of CHRIST (whence the use of this Psalm on Ascension Day in the Church of England), but for His manifestation of that glory, for some proof of His might which may help His suffering and timid sheep. When He was exalted upon the Cross, He drew all men to Him, but it needed His exaltation to heaven to *deliver His beloved* from doubt, and fear, and carnal views of His kingdom, to permit the Pentecostal descent of the HOLY GHOST, to inspire those preachers who should make His glory known, not merely in the narrow circuit of Judea, but over all the earth ; that all His beloved, in any distress or anxiety, might call on Him, the Right Hand of the FATHER, to save them with His own Right Hand of atoning propitiation, hearing their prayer at every time of the day.

C.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.

Honorius.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

7 God hath spoken in his holiness : I will rejoice therefore, and divide Sichem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.

CHRIST divided *Shechem*, the "shoulder," after His Resurrection, when, bestowing the keys of the kingdom of heaven on the College of the Apostles in the person of S. Peter, He shared with them that government of His Church, that key of the house of David laid upon His shoulder, which He had previously retained in His own hands. He meted out the *valley of Succoth*, or of "booths," or "tabernacles," when He bestowed on the lowliest Christians, in their earthly bodies of this mortal warfare, a portion of the gifts and graces of the HOLY GHOST.

C.

Isa. xlii. 22.

8 Gilead is mine, and Manasses is mine : Ephraim also is the strength of my head.



## 9 Judah is my law-giver,

Here we have the twofold possessions of Israel, the cis-Jordanic and trans-Jordanic regions, described by the names of their most powerful occupants, typifying the union of active and contemplative Saints, and of Martyrs and Confessors in the one Church. *Gilead*, the "heap of witness," besides denoting the Martyrs, as already mentioned under Ps. lx. 7, also stands for the Doctors and teachers of the Church, who bear testimony by their discourses and their lives to the Gospel of CHRIST; while *Manasses*, "forgetfulness," represents that Jewish people which forgot CHRIST, and all His benefits, but yet remains His, and will one day return to Him; and the name also denotes those sinners who, like the prodigal son, forget for a while their FATHER which is in heaven, but come back at last, weary of their profitless wanderings. *Ephraim*, "fruitfulness," is the *strength of His head*, because those who are abundant in good works and humility become the diadem of CHRIST, "for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign in His land." *Judah is My King*. They point to the meaning of *Judah*, "praise," as showing that the Confessors, who praise God by their lives, rule His Church; or, they take it as "confession," as teaching us that none are dearer to God or more honoured in heaven than truly penitent sinners, who make confession and strive after amendment. And one will have it that the description of the prowess of Judas Maccabeus is an apt type of the effects of confession: "for he pursued the wicked, and sought them out, and burnt up those that vexed his people; wherefore the wicked shrank for fear of him, and all the workers of iniquity were troubled, because salvation prospered in his hand."

Honorius.

B.

C.

Pseudo-Hieron.

Ay.

Zech. ix. 16.

D. C.

Honorius.

Hugo Card.

1 Macc. iii. 5.

Moab is my wash-pot : over Edom will I cast out my shoe; upon Philistia will I triumph.

The figure is that of the conqueror, returning from battle, and using Moab as the foot-bath wherein he washes off the blood and dust and sweat, while he flings his shoes to Edom, waiting humbly, as a slave, upon his orders, and utters a shout of victory as the Philistine captives are marched past. The whole verse relates to CHRIST's conquest of the Gentiles, as the previous ones set forth His hereditary claim upon the allegiance of the Jews. S. Basil the Great suggests that the *wash-pot* denotes that Moab, once under the ban of exclusion from the congregation of the LORD unto the tenth generation, should be washed clean from all pollution in the laver of Baptism; while another Greek Father, taking Moab as the type of all heathens, declares that they shall be made to glow and boil with the fervour of Divine grace. The change in the condition of Moab may not

Agellius.

Deut. xxiii. 3.

Hesychius.



- Herodot. ii. 172. inaply be illustrated by that story of Amasis, king of Egypt, who found himself treated with some disrespect because of his lowly origin, and by way of showing his subjects their folly, cast an image of a god out of the metal of a golden wash-pot which he had used for his feet, which image they worshipped with great reverence, and were then reminded by him that as it was now a sacred idol, not a menial vessel, so he had ceased to be a plebeian, and must be honoured as a king. Over *Edom*, the "red land" of sinful heathenism, CHRIST casts abroad the knowledge of the Gospel, the mystery of His Incarnation, so that the *aliens became His friends* (Vulg.) and *are subject unto Him* (LXX.), for His "Name shall be great among the Gentiles."
- S. Bruno Carth. R.
- Mal. i. 11.

10 Who will lead me into the strong city : and who will bring me into Edom ?

- C. Haymo. It is spoken in the person of CHRIST, in His desire to spoil Hell, to enter the strong man's house, breaking the gates of brass, and smiting the bars of iron in sunder, and then returning thence to Edom, back to the Gentile earth, to have it for His own as a possession.

11 Hast not thou forsaken us, O God : and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts ?

- Ay. We should do better to read, in the first clause, (with A.V., LXX., and Vulg.) *Wilt not Thou, O God, Who hast cast us off?* The Head, speaking in the person of His members, answers His own question, alleging that none but God can achieve the task of conquering hell and converting heathendom. So He spake by the Prophet: "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with Me ; and I looked, and there was none to help ; and I wondered that there was none to uphold ; therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto Me." God, Who once *cast us off*, (Vulg. A.V.) driving us from Paradise, and suffering us to be persecuted by tyrants in later days, will not reject us now, but will *go forth with our hosts*, co-operating in all our strivings after good, enabling His preachers to force their way into the strongly-fenced city of a sinner's heart, to conquer the Edom of earthly passions, in themselves and others, that they may enter as conquerors also into another and mightier City, "with a wall great and high, having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels," into a Land purchased by the red Blood of Jesus.
- Isa. lxiii. 3, 5.
- Honorius.
- Hugo Card.
- Rev. xxi. 12.

12 O help us against the enemy : for vain is the help of man.

13 Through God we shall do great acts : and it is he that shall tread down our enemies.



For *against the enemy* the A. V. here reads, agreeing with <sup>Arnobius.</sup> LXX. and Vulgate, and with the Prayer Book version of Ps. lx. 11, *from trouble*, whence the commentators take occasion to tell us that trouble itself is often the source whence God helps us, when we least suppose so. The whole passage may be taken either of CHRIST, praying to the FATHER for the victorious termination of His Passion, or else of the Church, asking for deliverance from persecution, and freely trusting in His help only, as amply sufficient to achieve triumph, after all human aid, arms, warriors, allies, had been proved of no avail. But He will tread down our enemies, our sins and evil habits, when we call Him to our aid; as He will surely tread down all the enemies of righteousness, devils, and wicked men, in His final judgment. <sup>Agellius.</sup> <sup>Arnobius.</sup> <sup>s. Bruno</sup> <sup>Carth.</sup>

Wherefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, Who delivereth His beloved; glory be to the SON, His Right Hand, set up above the heavens; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, through Whom we shall do great acts.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

Make ready our heart, O LORD, to give thanks unto Thy Name; that knowing Thee to have arisen right early, we may journey in good works thither where Thou art set up as Conqueror in the Kingdom. (5.) <sup>Ludolph.</sup>

Fill our ready heart, O LORD, with that gift whereby Thou mayest be pleased, that we may praise Thee with knowledge of the truth, and formed anew for the better, may rejoice in Thine honour. (11.) <sup>Mozarabic.</sup>

O God, Who lovest all that is sincere and pure, and dwellest of Thy bountiful goodness in the chaste souls of the faithful; purify us from all taint of sin, that we may always have our heart ready for Thee, and sing and play worthily unto Thee in Thy glory. (1.) <sup>D. C.</sup>

#### PSALM CIX.

TITLE. To the Chief Musician: A Psalm of David. LXX. and Vulgate: To the end, a Psalm of David.

#### ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST lay under a curse, that He might deliver us from the curse of the Law. The Voice of CHRIST concerning the Jews and the traitor Judas. The Voice of CHRIST to



the FATHER, concerning the Jews, and a curse on the traitor Judas. The Voice of CHRIST concerning Judas and those like him, that vengeance may come upon them, and a summing-up of the Passion of CHRIST. On warning one's neighbour.

VEN. BEDE. This well-known title refers to CHRIST the LORD. In the first part the LORD rebukes the Jews, who chose to pay evil for good to their Maker: *O God, my praise*. Secondly; the wickedness of the traitor Judas, and of the faithless people is narrated, and what things should come upon them for such guilt: *Set Thou an ungodly man to be ruler over him*. Thirdly; He prays that delivered from the peril of the Passion, He may quickly attain the glory of Resurrection.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Of David, when without his knowledge they made Absalom king, who was slain for that reason. To us it sets forth the sufferings of the LORD's Anointed.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. The sufferings of CHRIST.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm in solitary address.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian and Monastic*. Saturday: Matins. [Seven Dolours B.V.M.: III. Nocturn.]

*Ambrosian*. Friday of Second Week: III. Nocturn. [Monday before Easter, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Eve: Matins.]

*Parisian*. Tuesday: Nones.

*Lyons*. Saturday: Matins.

*Quignon*. Tuesday: Matins.

#### ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian, Monastic, and Lyons*. As preceding Psalm. Seven Dolours: He hath filled me with bitterness \* He hath made me drunken with wormwood.

*Ambrosian*. As Psalm 107. [Monday before Easter: Help Me \* O LORD, my GOD. Kyr. Kyr. Kyr. Maundy Thursday: They have rewarded \* Me evil for good, and hatred for My good will. Kyr. Kyr. Kyr. Good Friday: The mouth of the ungodly \* yea, the mouth of the deceitful, is opened upon Me. Kyr. Kyr. Kyr. Easter Eve: Judas, when he saw that He was condemned, said, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.]

The occasion of this Psalm is unknown. If it be Davidic, it may apply to Doeg, to Shimei, or as the Syriac Psalter seems to hint, to Antiochus. If it be a Post-Captivity Psalm, which its position in the fifth Book of the Psalter makes at least probable, it is perhaps directed against some leader in the conspiracy against Nehemiah, or against one of those apostate High Priests who brought about the Maccabee revolution. But the use made of it by S. Peter, who expressly declares it to have been prophetic of the treason and punishment of Judas Iscariot (Acts i. 16, 20,) leaves no doubt as to its true intention, which can be evaded only by rejecting the authority of the New Testament in the exposition of the Old.

1 Hold not thy tongue, O God of my praise : for



the mouth of the ungodly, yea, the mouth of the deceitful is opened upon me.

*O God of my praise.* So Aquila, Symmachus, and S. Jerome treat the words, regarding them as an epithet of God, but the LXX. and Vulgate both take *praise* as the accusative after the verb, and read, *O God, be not silent as to my praise.*<sup>1</sup>

That is, as they explain it, CHRIST, beset by slanderers on all sides, beseeches the FATHER to bear witness to Him by hastening the glory of the Resurrection, and causing His Gospel to be preached throughout the world, although His voice be drowned for the time by that of Judas, sinner and traitor, handing Him over to His enemies, and saying, "What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?" And not Judas only, but the unbelieving chief priests and Pharisees, bribing the soldiers who watched at the sepulchre, and telling them, "Say ye, His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept."

Haymo.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.

A.  
Honorius.  
S. Matt.  
xxvi. 15.

S. Matt.  
xxviii. 13.

2 And they have spoken against me with false tongues : they compassed me about also with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause.

They spoke *with false tongues*, when they said, "Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth ; tell us, therefore, Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?" They compassed Him about with *words of hatred* when they said, "Behold a Man gluttonous, and a winebibber ;" "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil ;" and above all, when they raised the shout, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," and joined in the revilings of those who mocked Him on the Cross. *Without a cause.* And therefore the LORD Himself saith, "Many good works have I showed you from My FATHER, for which of those works do ye stone Me?" and again, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin ; but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My FATHER ;" but this cometh to pass that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, "They hated Me without a cause."

C.  
S. Matt.  
xxii. 16.

S. Matt. xi.  
19.  
S. John viii.  
48.

Honorius.  
S. John x.  
32 ; xv. 24.

Ps. xxxv.  
19 ; lxi. 4.

3 For the love that I had unto them, lo, they take now my contrary part : but I give myself unto prayer.

4 Thus have they rewarded me evil for good : and hatred for my good will.

<sup>1</sup> The first words of the Vulgate translation are therefore *Deus laudem*, not *laudum*, as usually printed in our Prayer

Book, seemingly to bring the Latin into accord with the English, for it does not exist as a variant.



- Agellius.  
C. He shows that their sin was greater than that of persecuting an inoffensive and guiltless person, in that they were guilty of black ingratitude to a benefactor. The first grade in wickedness is failing to repay good for good; the second is to repay evil with evil; the third is to repay good with evil. And, contrariwise, the lowest form of righteousness is to repay good for good; the second, not to repay evil for evil; the third and highest kind of virtue is to repay good for evil. And whereas the Jews were determined to adopt the most evil of all these ways, so the LORD opposed them with perfect loving-kindness, and prayed upon the Cross for those who had deliberately doomed Him to death. It was truly *evil* they gave Him *for good*, mockings and insults for His preaching, vinegar and gall for His miracles of feeding and His turning water into wine, stripes and wounds for His marvellous cures, crucifixion and death for His raising the dead to life. *Hatred for His good will*, when, after hearing Him cry, "FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" they replied, "He saved others, let Him save Himself, if He be CHRIST, the chosen of God." And this is the thought which, expanded from those words of Micah, "O My people, what have I done unto thee? or wherein have I wearied thee? testify against Me," has been wrought out into the wonderful Good Friday Reproaches, in use throughout the Western Church. *But I give myself unto prayer*. We may take this as denoting merely that prayer was the LORD's sole weapon of defence against His enemies; or we may add, with the Syriac Psalter, *for them*, and apply it to His intercession on behalf of His foes, and that, we may well believe from the tenor of the prayer He taught His disciples, not once only, but at all times when they took His contrary part, or, as LXX. and Vulgate have it, *slandered Him*; doing worse thereby, as S. Augustine remarks, than in slaying His Body.
- Honorius.
- S. Luke  
xxiii. 34, 35.
- Micah vi. 3.
- Eusebius.
- S. Chrysost.
- Bellarmino.
- A.

5 Set thou an ungodly man to be ruler over him :  
and let Satan stand at his right hand.

- Here commences that terrible series of maledictions, unparalleled in Holy Writ, as directed against an individual sinner, albeit it is little more than a special republication of the national woes denounced in Leviticus xxvi. and Deuteronomy xxviii. S. Chrysostom suggests, with much probability, that the original application is to Jason or Menelaus, the supplanters of Onias in the High Priesthood, whose treason and apostasy brought about the great persecution of Judaism by Antiochus Epiphanes. There are two current Christian expositions of this verse; the more common referring it to Judas Iscariot, a less frequent one to Caiaphas. And whereas a Saint may say, "I have set God always before me; for He is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall;" here Satan
- S. Chrysost.
- 2 Mac. iv.
- A.  
Lyranus.  
D. C.
- Ps. xvi. 9.  
A.



takes that place beside the sinner, to insure his fall. The ungodly was *over* Judas, because he yielded himself up to his rule, Satan was at his right hand, when he preferred covetousness to wisdom, and money to his salvation. When Satan stood at the right hand of Joshua the High Priest to resist him, "the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan;" but no such check took place on behalf of Judas, for he could not have his right hand set free, because he was wise only in the guiltiness of the left hand, and never attained to be saved by confession, but died a despairing suicide. Satan was at his right hand, or at that of Caiaphas, as a comrade, as his helper and chief strength in the work of betraying and crucifying the LORD, and will stand again at his right hand as accuser in the Judgment to draw down a penalty on the very crimes he suggested. And observe, that as Judas stands for a type of the unbelieving Synagogue, as Peter of the believing Church; so the Jewish nation, having rejected CHRIST as King, had in His stead *an ungodly man*, the heathen Cæsar, and Pilate as his vicegerent, to be ruler over them, and Satan, instead of God, as master of their hearts. Another, adopting in the main the same allegory, takes Barabbas to be the ungodly man of the Psalm. Cardinal Hugo explains the epithet as denoting evil prelates, of whom he distinguishes three classes—covetous, stupid, and mischievous. And he further points out that Satan occupies various positions with regard to different men. He is sometimes on the left hand, when he persecutes in temporal things; sometimes on the right, when he opposes in spiritual matters; he is before the face of those who beware of his wiles, behind the back of such as do not foresee his plots; he is over those whom he rules, and under such as have trampled him beneath their feet.

Zech. iii. 2.

C.

Z.  
Theodoret.

Hugo Card.

Agellius.

A.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
Hugo Card.

6 When sentence is given upon him, let him be condemned : and let his prayer be turned into sin.

*Let him be condemned.* The LXX. and Vulgate, closer to the Hebrew, read, *Let him go out condemned*, that is, leave the court with the sentence of "Guilty" recorded. They remind us that this doom fell in twofold wise upon Judas. First, when the LORD said, "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, answered, and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said." "And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop, Satan entered into him. He then having received the sop, went immediately out;" *out* of the fellowship of the Apostles, *out* of the Catholic Church, *out* of the state of grace. Again, Judas gave sentence upon himself when he brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests, "saying, I have

L.

S. Matt.  
xxvi. 24.S. John xiii.  
26, 30.

Ay.

S. Matt.  
xxviii. 4.



- sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself;" going *out* of the temple, in token of abandonment of religion, and then *out* of the world, unto his own place. They discuss a question as to the special *prayer* of Judas which was *turned into sin*. One suggests that it was that clause of the Our FATHER which says, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us;" inasmuch as he who betrayed the Author of all good, fell very far short of excusing his own debtors. Others refer it to the turn his remorse took, inducing despair instead of repentance, since there is no doubt that his suicide was more fatal to his soul than his treason, which CHRIST would have surely pardoned had He been intreated by the offender. The words also apply to the Jewish nation, which went out in exile, condemned by the just sentence of GOD, because it refused to hear His SON, and whose prayer is *turned into sin*, inasmuch as it clings to a dead and abolished Law, and does not ask in CHRIST's Name; nay, by using in its services this Psalm and many other like passages of Scripture denouncing woes against the unbelievers, it curses itself, especially when invoking those very woes upon the heads of Christians; and further, by praying for another Messiah than Him Who hath come, it is in fact asking for the manifestation of Anti-Christ. And therefore the Wise Man's sentence falls on them, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." The words have yet a wider range, for they apply to all those who, at the Last Judgment, instead of being greeted with the welcome, "Enter thou into the joy of thy LORD," shall hear the doom, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," and shall be cast out into outer darkness. The prayer of such as these is turned unto sin for other causes besides that first and principal one of not asking in CHRIST's Name: namely, unreasonable requests, "Ye ask, and have not, because ye ask amiss;" human impatience, "Jonah wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live;" unbelief, "They pray unto a God that cannot save;" carelessness, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD negligently;" unworthiness on the part of the officiant, "for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." But the penitent sinner is always heard, like the publican in the temple; and prayer such as that is of much avail for the remission of sins.
- D. C. and C. S. Bruno Carth.
- P. S. Albertus Magnus.
- B. Prov. xxviii. 9.
- Honorius.
- Hugo Card.
- S. James iv. 3. Jonah iv. 8. Isa. xlv. 20. Jer. xlviii. 10.
- 1 Cor. xi. 29.
- Bellarmino.

. 7 Let his days be few : and let another take his office.

Acts i. 20.  
S. Hieron.

A.

This is the verse which S. Peter applies to Judas, and it was fulfilled to the letter, whether we take the first clause as referring to the briefness of his life, or to that of his apostle-



ship, and to the small interval which elapsed between his treason and his suicide. And S. Matthias, being, so far as we know, unconnected with him by any tie of kindred, or even of close acquaintanceship, and altogether unlike him in life and conduct, was in the fullest sense, *another*, not a second self. The word **מִשְׁפָּט**, here translated *office*, is more exactly *oversight*, exactly rendered by the LXX. *ἐπισκοπή*, while the Vulgate and the A.V. in the parallel passage of the Acts, translate *bishopric*. And, as Judas here too represents the Synagogue, we are fitly reminded that its days were very few, for it fell for ever in forty years from the Crucifixion, and the Aaronic priesthood gave way to that of Melchisedek, renewed, as it had begun, amongst the Gentiles. The application of the text to evil rulers in the Christian Church, is sufficiently obvious, and is enforced by several commentators.

Z.

Bellarmine.

A.

Eusebius.

Pseudo-Hieron.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.  
Hugo Card.

8 Let his children be fatherless : and his wife a widow.

A widely current view, based on this passage, is that the money which Judas stole from the bag, and the sum he received in payment of his treason, were intended for the support of his wife and children, who were consenting parties to the means he employed, and were therefore involved in his guilt and punishment. Some, however, dwelling on the absence of any hint to this effect in the Gospels, refer the prophecy to one of the intrusive High Priests of whom mention has been already made, and assume that it was fulfilled in him. Others, following the constant reference to the Israelites as God's children, and to the Jewish Church as His wife, in Holy Writ, say that by refusing CHRIST and taking the side of Judas, the Synagogue became divorced from God, and attached herself to Judas, bringing him a dowry of thirty pieces of silver; and the Israelites, by complicity in his treason, and by imitating his example, became his children, and by reason of their unbelief, can claim him only, and not the Patriarch, son of Jacob, as their ancestor, whence they take the name of Jews. Cardinal Hugo, applying the psalm to wicked Bishops, observes that it is far better for a See to be widowed and the flock pastorless, than to be under the rule of an evil Prelate. But one ancient commentator takes the words in a good sense. Let the children of Satan be orphaned by their father's overthrow, and consequent desertion of them, and let his *wife*, to wit, any Church which has fallen into unbelief or heresy, be widowed, that, like Ruth, she may be wedded anew to the Prince of Bethlehem. Further, the soul and the works of each man may be styled his wife and children, and yield a similar meaning. It may be added that this verse, taken in connection with the parable of Dives and Lazarus, has served as an argument

A.

C.

Lyranus.

Ay.

S. Chrysost.

Z.

Pseudo-Hieron.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.

Hugo Card.

Arnobius.

Hugo Card.

A.



**The Gloss.** for the consciousness of the departed as to the state of their kindred, as it seems to imply an aggravation of the curse on the dead sinner. Yet, in truth, it need not denote so much, but only the increased pain at the time of death on the one hand, and also the more solemn warning thus afforded to other sinners by seeing the iniquity of the father thus visited upon the children.

9 Let his children be vagabonds, and beg their bread : let them seek it also out of desolate places.

**A.** Whether Judas had children, we know not, but it is certain that if he had, his descendants must have been involved in the common ruin and exile of the whole guilty nation, of which Cain, "a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth," because of the slaughter of righteous Abel, was a type. So Medea, in the tragedy, imprecates curses on her faithless husband :

**Seneca.**  
**Medea, i. 19.**

Mihi pejus aliquid, quod precer sponso malum :  
Vivat : per urbes erret ignotas egens,  
Exul, pavens, invisus, incerti laris.

Worse evil yet I pray for on my spouse,  
Let him still live, through strange towns roam in want,  
Exiled, suspected, cowering, with no home.

**Z.** *Out of desolate places.* The A.V., adding the word *their*, clears up the meaning of this clause ; which is, that they are not only to be exiled beggars, but to leave their home behind in ruins ; a terrible judgment, slurred over by the LXX. and Vulgate, which merely read, *Let them be cast out of their dwellings.* How bitterly the judgment of mendicancy was fulfilled, we may learn from one scornful line of the great Roman satirist (not the sole testimony of the kind extant,) where he depicts them as occupying the place of the modern gipsy :

**Juvenal.**  
**Sat. vi. 543.**

Arcanam Judæa tremens mendicat in aurem.

Judea, crouching, begs in the private ear.

**S. Hieron.**  
**in Sophon.**

And S. Jerome draws a vivid picture of the scene on the last day of the siege, when the city was actually taken, and the multitude assembled, of both sexes and all ages and ranks, to lament over the ruined Temple, and were obliged to purchase even that sad gratification with bribes to the Roman soldiery. Even in his own day, the Saint adds, the same rule prevailed. No Jews entered Jerusalem save to mourn, and they had to pay heavily for licence to do even that, so that they who had in that place bought CHRIST'S Blood, were now compelled to buy their own tears ; thus giving a new and yet more terrible



reading to the lament of their fathers on the fall of the first Temple, "We have drunk our water for money."

Lam. v. 4.

10 Let the extortioner consume all that he hath :  
and let the stranger spoil his labour.

They raise here again the question concerning Judas, how this curse can apply to him, if he shared in the common poverty of the Apostles, having left all to follow CHRIST. And the suggested answer is that he merely transferred his possessions to his family, and followed CHRIST in the hope of stealing from the contributions made to the common stock. The word translated *consume* ought rather to be *lay snares for*, entangling the debtor in the meshes of bonds and obligations. The LXX. and Vulgate however read *search out*,<sup>1</sup> and we are reminded of the avidity with which the soldiers of Titus ransacked the most unlikely places of the captured city in search of gold. The mystical interpretation sees the devil in the usurer of this verse, because he gives but scanty and deceitful loans, intending to exact in return the true riches of the soul with heavy interest. "Beware," observes a Saint, "of that usurer, who searches out the substance of thy soul, if thou have incurred the debt of any graver sin, who shuts thy heart up in the ground, and buries thy soul under that turf wherewith thou didst hide thy gold." There are four ways of escaping this extortioner. First, to acquire holiness, not earthly riches. Secondly, to store one's treasure in heaven, not on earth. Thirdly, to be merciful to our own debtors. Fourthly, to take refuge with CHRIST, Who will pay our debt, or punish our remorseless creditor. *And let the stranger spoil his labour.* Literally, the money which Judas earned by his treason was not saved even for his family, but expended upon a field "to bury strangers in." Spoken of the Jews, we may remember not only the vast spoils carried off by the army of Titus, (so great that the value of gold was for a time depreciated one-half throughout Syria by the sudden influx), and the legal alienation of the soil of Jerusalem by Hadrian's erection of it into a colony, but the cruel exactions, banishments, and massacres to which they were subjected again and again: as during the march of the First Crusade; in France under Philip Augustus, S. Louis, and Philip the Fair; in England under Richard I., Henry III., and Edward I.; in Spain from the establishment to the fall of the Inquisition, and their subtler, but not less real loss of nobility of character, by the constant exercise of sordid methods of gain. The allegorical exposition takes the spoiling strangers to be evil spirits, who plunder the spiritual riches of the soul.

A.

Cajetanus.

Bellarmino.  
Joseph.  
Bell. Jud.  
vi. 9.  
S. Bruno  
Cartil.

S. Ambros.  
lib. ii. in S.  
Jacob. cap.  
5.

Le Blanc.

Honorius.

S. Matt.  
xxvii. 7.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
Honorius.

<sup>1</sup> Reading  $\psi\psi\psi$  for  $\psi\psi\psi$ .



11 Let there be no man to pity him : nor to have compassion upon his fatherless children.

BeUarmine. It was so, when the chief priests turned with a sneer from the miserable Judas in his hour of remorse ; and from looking at his fate, again our eyes are directed to the unparalleled disasters of the Jews. No ally dared to join himself to them against Titus ; even Agrippa forsook his kindred to secure himself with the Romans. Titus, powerful in all else with his soldiery, could not check their savage cruelty in the siege and sack of Jerusalem ; no deliverer ever presented himself, save that false Messiah, Bar-cohab, who renewed for his people, under Hadrian, the ruin which had fallen on the previous generation under Titus ; no Prophet from then till now has arisen to bring a word of comfort to the hapless race ; Joseph. while history records for us the fact that such children as were Bell. Jud. vi. not involved in the well-nigh indiscriminate slaughter of their parents by Titus, were sold into slavery by the conquerors.

12 Let his posterity be destroyed : and in the next generation let his name be clean put out.

Josephus. In the war which closed with the capture of the Holy City and the massacre in Cyrene, the number of Jews who perished in time of battle, exclusive of the victims of famine and pestilence, was one million three hundred and fifty-six thousand, of whom eleven hundred thousand fell in Jerusalem alone. In the *next generation*, the revolt of Bar-cohab cost, in like manner, five hundred and eighty thousand lives, and terminated for ever the national polity of the Jews. Dion Cass. Mystically, they tell us of the cessation of the Aaronic priesthood, and the transfer of religious supremacy from the lineal to the spiritual descendants of Abraham, " which were born, S. John i. 13. not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." But amongst that new spiritual offspring, Bellarmine. no children of Judas in the faith are reckoned, so that he alone of the Apostles begat no sons in the Gospel. There is P. probably a reference here to the genealogical records and pedigrees, now so far lost by the Jews that they are unable to trace their descent with accuracy, or else to the census of Agellius. the population of Canaan, whence the names of the Jewish exiles were at once expunged, in a single generation, by the Ricard. Roman authorities. They tell us that a spiritual warning Victorin. may be drawn from the verse, urging us to cut off the earliest Ay. suggestions of temptation and evil thoughts, that perishing in the first generation, they may be unable to give birth to a progeny of sins.

13 Let the wickedness of his fathers be had in



remembrance in the sight of the LORD : and let not the sin of his mother be done away.

14 Let them always be before the LORD : that he may root out the memorial of them from off the earth ;

The wickedness of previous generations was an ever accumulating mass, ready to fall at the given time upon their guilty descendants, and therefore the LORD said, "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the porch and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." The sinful mother of that evil race was the Synagogue, or else Jerusalem itself as the metropolis of the Aaronic polity, whereof Jeremiah saith, "Jerusalem hath grievously sinned." And the curse here imprecated does not contradict that other saying, "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son," since the Jews perished for their own sins, for their imitation of the guilt of their forefathers, whereas such as turned to the LORD were saved, as in that marvellous escape of the little band of Christians from the siege of Jerusalem.

Their guilt shall be ever *before the Lord*, either in the sense of His not forgetting them, or in that of standing in His presence as an object of punishment. Again, it may be taken of the obstinate resistance of these sinners to GOD, that they, as it were, oppose Him face to face. And there is a sense in which the imprecation has been thoroughly fulfilled, for the Church in her recitation of the Creeds, and her lection of the Gospels, as well as in her commemoration of the Martyrs, makes daily mention before GOD of the sin perpetuated in the rejection of CHRIST; and in her prayer for the conversion of Israel, implores that the name of Jew and the memory of the Law may be blotted out for ever by the absorption of the whole race into the Christian fold.

15 And that, because his mind was not to do good : but persecuted the poor helpless man, that he might slay him that was vexed at the heart.

The suggestion that we may have here a primary reference to the murder of the High Priest Onias III. at the instigation of Menelaus, one of his supplanters in office, (as S. Chrysostom appears to think), is encouraged by the play upon his name discoverable in the Hebrew word for *needy* (A.V.) in this place, נִיָּו 'oni. But in the deeper sense, they take the words as descriptive of the conspiracy against CHRIST; Who,



2 Cor. viii. 9. "though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich;" Who was *vexed at the heart*, when He wept over Jerusalem, and when during the Agony in the Garden, He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." The word *man* too, may be emphatic, reminding us how Pilate said, "Behold the Man," and the people replied, "Crucify Him, crucify Him."

S. Matt.  
xxvi. 38.  
Stier.  
S. John xix.  
5, 6.

16 His delight was in cursing, and it shall happen unto him : he loved not blessing, therefore shall it be far from him.

17 He clothed himself with cursing, like as with a raiment : and it shall come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.

- Bellarmino. Judas, who chose to gratify his avarice, and the Jews, who invoked the vengeance of CHRIST's Blood on themselves and their children, alike loved and invited a curse, and put themselves far from Him Whom they did not love, the Blessing of the whole universe. The story of the apostasy, in the very moment of consummating his martyrdom, of the priest Sapritius, who had valiantly endured torture for the Name of CHRIST in the persecution of Valerian, but obstinately refused to pardon his former friend Nicephorus, who vainly besought him by letter, by the intercession of common friends, and finally by kneeling to him as he went from the rack to the block, furnishes another example of one who loved not blessing, and therefore found it far from him when it seemed within his grasp. He who loves sin, the parent of a curse, loves the curse too. And therefore Moses said to the children of Israel, "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way." *And it shall come, &c.* This rendering, which is also that of the A.V., is incorrect, as the tense is past, as rightly translated by LXX. and Vulgate, *It came, &c.* The latter part of the seventeenth verse therefore carries on the idea in the first clause, and depicts sin as the garment, water, and oil of the offender. The majority of the commentators take these three words as denoting various degrees of persistency in guilt. Thus a Greek Father tells us that *raiment* denotes the continual clinging of sin; *water*, its vehement contact, as of a drenching torrent; *oil*, the difficulty of washing away its effects. Another, not very dissimilarly, bids us observe the complete and close external pressure of the first, the internal diffusion of the second when swallowed, the penetration of the third.
- Deut. xi. 26.
- S. Chrysost.
- Genebrardus.
- Le Blanc.
- Not a few have supposed that the words *It came into his*



*bowels like water*, bear a reference to the "water of jealousy," of which the priest had to say to a suspected adulteress, "This water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels to make thy belly to swell and thy thigh to rot." But there then arises the difficulty of finding any similar allusion in the raiment and the oil, and it seems therefore better to understand all three as denoting the acquiescence and pleasure of the sinner in his iniquity, so that it not only covers him, but is as drink to his thirsty soul, or as anointing to his body, or marrow to his bones. So Apollinarius translates it:

*ἀρὴν οὐλομένην ἱκέλην ἐνεδύσατο πέπλῳ,  
οἷα δὲ διαψῶντι ἐπήλοθεν ἔγκασιν ὕδωρ,  
ὅστέα πιαίνουσα κατὰ χρέος ἦντ' ἔλαιον.*

Fell cursing he put on, like to a robe,  
It came as water to a thirsty man  
Into his bowels, fattening his bones  
As suited him, like oil.

And then the words will severally denote the corruption of the body, which is outward, the depravation of the soul, flooded internally with sin, the delight of the senses and will in that sin, signified by the oil, penetrating to the very bones, or strongest faculties of the soul, enervating and corrupting them; while Christians, on the other hand, have put on ΧΡΙΣΤΟΝ, drink from Him the living water of the Rock, and have an unction from the Holy One.

18 Let it be unto him as the cloke that he hath upon him : and as the girdle that he is alway girded withal.

This is the clinging vesture of sin, more fatal than that fabled shirt of Nessus which ate into the mighty form of Hercules; "the cloke, rolled in bloodshed, which shall be for burning, fuel of fire," of which the Prophet speaks. It is not merely to envelop the sinner, but to be closely bound about him with a girdle, the girdle of an evil will, which makes him prompt and succinct for running the race of iniquity. Some have taken the word, with a quaint literalism, as denoting that the girdle of Judas was the instrument of his suicide by hanging. We have a plentiful choice of other girdles than this one of sin : for there is that of which we read, "Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." There is the girdle of penitence, that leathern belt which the Baptist wore, in token of mortification of the flesh; that of continence, whereof the LORD saith, "Let your loins be girded about;" the girdle of might, "Gird Thee with Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Thou most mighty;" and the girdle of humility, the towel wherewith the LORD girded Himself when He washed the feet of His disciples. Any of these will serve

Cocceius.

Ay.

Hugo Card.

Cocceius.

Bellarmine.

S. Bruno

Carth.

Isa. ix. 5,

Heb.

Agellius.

S. Bonaven-

tura.

Isa. xi. 5.

S. Matt.

iii. 4.

S. Luke xii.

35.

Ps. xiv. 4.

S. John

xiii. 4.



to fasten closely to us that righteousness of CHRIST which we must needs put on.

19 Let it thus happen from the LORD unto mine enemies : and to those that speak evil against my soul.

- L. The Vulgate, apparently from a trifling error in reading the LXX., turns the former clause here, *This is the work of them that slander me unto the Lord*, and the commentators have been at some pains to explain the passage. But as they agree, for the most part in taking *work* to mean *reward*, or hire of work, and interpret the remainder as equivalent to the latter part of the verse in meaning, there is little difference between the Latins and Greeks in their exposition.
- D. C. Stress is, however, variously laid on the word *soul*, some taking it, and rightly, as meaning *life*, and the words therefore as referring to the false charges against CHRIST, while others prefer to point to various heresies as to the Person of CHRIST, such as those of the Docetæ, the Arians, Eutychians, &c., and one expositor supposes that the word is used in contradistinction to *body*, because the charges against our LORD's poverty and the like, having reference to His human form, were true in fact, however hostile in application. But one moral lesson applies to all the interpretations alike, the deadly peril of joining Satan in his office of accuser, and slandering the righteous.
- A. Haymo.
- C.
- D. C.

20 But deal thou with me, O LORD GOD, according unto thy Name : for sweet is thy mercy.

- Bellarmino. Here the tone of the Psalm changes, and the LORD turns from the thought of His enemies to make prayer to His FATHER for Himself and His Body the Church. *Deal Thou with Me*. The LXX. and Vulgate, better, *act with Me*, (*συνεργον μεν' εμου, fac mecum*), that is, *help Me*, take My part, by granting Me a speedy and glorious Resurrection. And while CHRIST can say, in His manhood, *Act with Me*, so all His disciples can do, because God and they are fellow-workers ; He only can say it as God too, for " what things soever He [the FATHER] doeth, these also doeth the SON likewise." *For sweet is Thy mercy*. If CHRIST, Who suffered all the bitterness of the Passion for us, can use these words, much more we, whom He has redeemed by His free grace alone, for whose sake He took upon Him our flesh, and gave Himself a ransom for us. His justice is terrible, but His mercy is sweet.
- A. 2 Cor. vi. 1.
- C. S. John v.
19. Bellarmino.
- Ay.
- C.
- D. C.

S. Anselm.  
Luccens.

O the depth, the breadth, the height,  
Of Thy love's extension,



JESU, O the wondrous might  
Of Thy condescension ;  
Innocency's purest bloom,  
All Thy foes refuting,  
Bearing all our sorrows' doom,  
All our sins' imputing.

The Hymn,  
*Jesu mi dul-*  
*cissime.*

Mine the while the joys of life,  
Thine its tribulation ;  
Mine the glory of the strife,  
Thine the consternation ;  
Mine the banquet's sweetness all,  
Thine the self-devotion,  
Thine the vinegar and gall  
For Thy bitter potion.

21 O deliver me, for I am helpless and poor : and  
my heart is wounded within me.

There would seem here, when we take the verse as spoken in the Person of CHRIST, a special reference to His words on the eve of the Passion : " Now is My soul troubled ; and what shall I say ? FATHER, save Me from this hour." The Psalmist, by applying to himself the same three epithets as those in the fifteenth verse, identifies himself as the object of the persecution there described.

Bellarmino.

S. John xii.

27.  
Agellius.

*And My heart is wounded within Me.* Therefore, as His heart could be wounded, or *troubled*, as LXX. and Vulgate take it, we are assured that He was very Man, and can trust in His entire sympathy. His heart was wounded, not only by the sorrows of the Passion, but with the wound of love, as well as with the spear-thrust on the Cross. And we have a further reference, it may be, to the cause assigned by modern science as the immediate one of His death, " rupture of the heart from agony of mind." When the Church, His Body, adopts these words as her own, or any suffering member thereof does the like, the answer is clear and consoling, " To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word ;" fitly said, because nought so troubles and wounds the heart of man as the thought of his own sin and God's judgment.

C.

The Gloss.

Stroud,  
Physical  
Cause of  
Christ's  
Death.  
Agellius.

Isa. lxxvi. 2.

Arnobius.  
D. C.

22 I go hence like the shadow that departeth :  
and am driven away as the grasshopper.

The LORD, when seized by the soldiers in the garden, was carried away from the very midst of His disciples, as swiftly and silently as the clouds depart when the sun breaks out ; or rather, as the shadows at sunset lengthen out and melt away into the darkness. And as the *grasshopper*, or rather *locust*, is easily driven from place to place, either by the wind, or by beaters with a stick, to force it off plants, so CHRIST was hunted

C.

Z.



from Bethlehem and Nazareth into Egypt, pursued by enemies in Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Jerusalem, dragged on the very night of His arrest to Annas, and Caiaphas, and Pilate, and Herod, driven out again, bearing His Cross, to Calvary, thence removed again to the grave, whence, as a locust saves itself from its foes by a sudden spring, the LORD escaped by the power of His Resurrection. And we may also take the words as spoken by Him on behalf of His Body, and specially with regard to the manner in which all His Apostles, "afraid as a grasshopper," forsook Him and fled, according to that saying, "Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are." And, having regard to the speed with which sudden swarms of locusts vanish, they apply the verse also to the Martyrs of a somewhat later day, at times fleeing from city to city, but also swept by multitudes into destruction by the fierce storms of persecution; and we may take it of a single soul also, startled out of its fancied security by the sudden thought of God's righteousness.

23 My knees are weak through fasting : my flesh is dried up for want of fatness.

We have here a brief account of the suffering and sorrowful life of CHRIST, Whose ministry began and ended with a long fast, that of the temptation in the wilderness, and that which lay between the Last Supper and the meal of broiled fish and honeycomb of which He partook after His Resurrection. The second clause may refer either to the wasting of His Body from long toil and austerity, as the reading above given and the A.V. both imply, or with LXX., Symmachus, and Vulgate, *for lack of oil*, disused in time of mourning; as we read, "Put on now mourning apparel, and anoint thyself not with oil;" so that the phrase will denote the continual grief of Him Whom we know as the Man of Sorrows. S. Augustine finds a mystical reference to the Apostles, wavering in their faith at the time of the Passion, because of their sudden loss of spiritual refreshment, and the withdrawal of the Bread of Life from them, and from the lack of that which later refreshed and strengthened them, the unction of the HOLY GHOST. There is, however, another interpretation, taking the words as those of the Church, asking to be heard, because she makes her prayer in precise accordance with God's command, "Turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning."

24 I became also a reproach unto them : they that looked upon me shaked their heads.



One citation from the Gospels exhausts all the needful comment on this verse: "And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the SON of GOD, come down from the Cross." Bellarmine.  
S. Matt.  
xxvii. 39.

25 Help me, O LORD my GOD : O save me according to thy mercy ;

26 And they shall know, how that this is thy hand : and that thou, LORD, hast done it.

Herein CHRIST prays for His own speedy Resurrection, and for His Church in all time of her need ; and in this latter sense He rightly says, *According to Thy mercy*, not Thy justice, as teaching us never to trust in our own righteousness, or ability to stand before the searching judgment of GOD, but in His grace and loving-kindness only. In the former sense, one special object of the Resurrection was to teach the Jews that they had been but the instruments of GOD's will in bringing the Passion about, for it was His *hand* ; even as CHRIST spake to Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power against Me, except it were given thee from above," and that He died, not because they were able to slay Him, but because He had power to lay down His life, and to take it again. Others refer the *hand* more especially to the deliverance in the Resurrection, for it was no theft of the disciples, but a divine miracle, which caused the disappearance of the sacred Body from the tomb. Yet again, these considerations were to lead them to a further one, that the Man they had rejected was indeed the Right Hand of GOD, made in time according to His humanity, but the eternal Creator by Whom the FATHER made and did all things, especially the salvation of mankind. And one at least did know that, even in the darkest hour of the Passion, exclaiming, "Truly this was the SON of GOD." D. C.  
Theodoret.  
C.  
S. John xix.  
11 ; x. 18.  
Lyranus.  
Agellius.  
A.  
S. Prosper.  
Ric. Hamp.  
S. Matt.  
xxvii. 54.

27 Though they curse, yet bless thou : and let them be confounded that rise up against me ; but let thy servant rejoice.

A very ancient explanation of this verse is that its first clause has special reference to the denunciations in the Synagogue worship directed against CHRIST and His disciples, contrasted with the songs of praise and benediction of His Name in the services of the Church. But we may keep closer to the former verse by continuing to interpret this one of the Passion, of the blasphemy then spoken against CHRIST, and above all, of His Crucifixion ("for he that is hanged is accursed of GOD,") wherein He was "made a curse for us," and of GOD's reversal of that curse by the Resurrection and Eusebius.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
Hesychius.  
Dent. xxi.  
23.  
Gal. iii. 13.



Ecclus. iv.  
21.  
2 Cor. vii.  
10.  
Cocceius.  
Bellarmine.

Ascension of His Son ; so that all those Jews who rose up against Him *were confounded*, some with that evil confusion which comes of refuted falsehood and vain resistance to overwhelming chastisement, others with that godly "shame which is glory and grace," working repentance unto salvation, so that CHRIST, the Servant of God, Who fulfilled His will as none others can do, rejoices in the increase of His Church, blessed by the FATHER with all spiritual might and benediction.

28 Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame : and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a cloke.

C.

Haymo.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Isa. xl. 3.

Baruch v. 1.

Isa. lxi. 7.

*A cloke.* This word sufficiently represents the Hebrew, which denotes a large mantle worn over other raiment. But the LXX. and Vulgate translate it a *double garment*, διπλοῦσα, *diploide*, that is, either lined, or so large as to be capable of being folded about the person.<sup>1</sup> And the commentators, besides the obvious sense of the completeness of the shame invoked, dwell particularly on this notion : Let it be double, observes one, because the Jews are now made naked to their shame, but if they be clothed with a knowledge of their own Law and also of the Gospel which has succeeded it, they will repent. If not, their confusion will still be double, before God and man, in this world and the next, in soul and body, by the loss of temple and country, for Jerusalem "hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins." Double also shall she receive in reward for repentance, when it shall be said to her, "Put off, O Jerusalem, the garment of thy mourning and affliction, and put on the comeliness of the glory that cometh from God for ever. Cast about thee a double garment of the righteousness which cometh from God, and set a diadem on thine head of the glory of the Everlasting." And that because God saith unto all such as have been put to this shame and confusion, "For your shame ye shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion ; therefore in their land they shall possess the double : everlasting joy shall be unto them."

29 As for me, I will give great thanks unto the LORD with my mouth : and praise him among the multitude ;

<sup>1</sup> Compare Horace, Ep. i. 17.  
Contra, quem duplici panno patientia velat,  
Mirabor.

On the other hand, I will admire him,  
Whom patience clothes in double-folded robe.



30 For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor : to save his soul from unrighteous judges.

This is spoken in contrast to the confusion of the ungodly. While they are awed and dumbfounded, CHRIST and His elect *will give great thanks* to the FATHER, and *praise Him among the multitude* that cannot be numbered, in the Heavenly Jerusalem, as well as in the midst of countless faithful hearts even here ; and that for the great unlikeness between Him and the false judge at whose right hand Satan stands, for while the one seeks to slay the poor helpless man, the other saves him from his judges. And from this verse Cardinal Hugo takes occasion to blame such as recite their office in private only, and inaudibly, instead of joining with clear utterance in the public service of the Church. There is a difference, moreover, in the Hebrew of the two verses where the phrase *at his right hand* occurs, which is lost in all the versions. In the former, verse 5, it is *לְיָמֵינוּ*, "against his right hand," implying opposition, while here it is *לְיָמֵינוּ*, "at the right hand," denoting co-operation, which the FATHER gave His SON, the Poor, as He stood before Caiaphas and Pilate, witnessing His good confession, and as the SON Himself does now, as from His throne on the right hand of GOD He aids every one that is poor in spirit, to save them *from the judges of their soul*, (as the A.V. margin rightly translates the closing words of the Psalm,) those emperors and rulers who endeavoured to stamp out Christianity of old by fierce persecutions, those unbelievers and false brethren of a later time who equally strive against the inner life and soul of the Church, those evil spirits who are the suggesters and assistants of both one and the other conspiracy against the Faith.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, the GOD of our praise ; glory be to the SON, the Poor Man, Who is the right Hand of GOD ; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the sweet mercy of the LORD.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

O GOD of unequalled mercy, Who didst vouchsafe to unde-  
 rgo a curse, that Thou mightest save us from the curse of  
 the Law, we beseech Thee that dealing with us in mercy for  
 Thy Name's sake, Thou wouldst deliver us from the sins  
 which pursue us and the ungodly which molest us. (5.)

Thine enemies spake evil against Thee, O LORD, then too  
 when with crafty flattery they praised Thee as a good  
 Master. Thou Who didst endure to be compassed and beset



with their words of hatred, receive now, we humbly beseech Thee, the prayers of our confession. (11.)

Mozarabic.  
Passiontide.

O CHRIST, unutterable WORD of GOD the FATHER, with Whom the tongue of the ungodly was deceitful, committing a heinous crime, that they might shed innocent blood, grant Thy Church the word of peace, that we who strive to conquer the world after Thine example, may attain after our departure to behold the heavens. (11.)

Mozarabic.  
Passiontide.

Only-begotten SON of GOD, Whose knees were weak through fasting, and Whose flesh was changed for lack of oil, cause us to run effectually after Thee for the perfume of Thine ointments, that Thou Who wast a reproach unto our enemies, mayest become the power of our salvation. (11.)

Mozarabic,  
for S. Leocadia, M.

Glorious and merciful LORD, Who didst grant unto blessed Leocadia to give great thanks unto Thee with her mouth, and didst will to be praised by her confession in the midst of the righteous, that Thou mightest glorify her, making her both confess Thee on earth, and rejoice in the assembly of the Saints; we beseech the gift of Thy bounty, that Thou wouldst grant us through her prayers to be purged from the taint of sin, to be delivered from everlasting burnings, and to attain the bliss of Thy glory. (11.)

D. C.

Thou, O LORD, Who art sweet in mercy, and makest glad with Thy good Spirit our heart troubled within us by the motions of our sins, mercifully help and save us, that Thy servants may rejoice in Thee, and cause us to give great thanks unto Thee, O LORD, for evermore. (1.)

## PSALM CX.

TITLE. A Psalm of David.

### ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST was born from the spiritual womb of GOD the FATHER, before the morning star. The Voice of the Church and of CHRIST to the FATHER. The Voice of the Church concerning the FATHER and the SON, or concerning the Nativity of CHRIST. The Promise of the FATHER to the SON. A prophecy of future victory, and concerning the Advent or Incarnation of the LORD. The Voice of the Church praising GOD. It is sung concerning CHRIST the LORD, as He Himself explains to the Pharisees. Concerning the Birthday of the LORD.

VEN. BEDE. This Psalm sings most fully and briefly of the Incarnation and Godhead of the LORD. In the first verse the Prophet narrates what the FATHER said unto the SON, showing at once the nature of Godhead and Manhood, *The Lord said, &c.* In the



second division, the FATHER, to some extent, according to the measure of our capacity, declares the nature of that Godhead: *With Thee the beginning.* In the third part, the Prophet again speaks until the end, again showing the form of His Manhood, *The Lord swears, &c.*

**SYRIAC PSALTER.** Of David, concerning the throne of the LORD, and His glorious power. A prophecy also of CHRIST, and of His triumph over the adversary.

**EUSEBIUS OF CESAREA.** The Victory of CHRIST.

**S. ATHANASIUS.** A Psalm in narrative; also, a Psalm of statement with prophecy.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* Sunday: Vespers. [Feasts of Our LORD, Corpus Christi, and Feasts of Saints: Vespers. Common of Apostles: II. Vespers.]

*Ambrosian.* Sunday: Vespers. [Christmas Day: III. Nocturn.]

*Parisian.* } Sunday: Vespers, and II. Vespers of Festivals.

*Lyons.* }

*Quignon.* Sunday: Vespers.

#### ANTIPHONS.

The Festival Antiphons to this Psalm in the Gregorian and Monastic uses are for the most part much varied, and borrowed from the first Lauds Psalm, that is, Psalm 93, so that it will suffice to give the chief deviations from this rule. The first verse of the Psalm is the normal Sunday Antiphon in all the rites.

*Gregorian.* [Christmas Day: II. Vespers. With Thee is the beginning \* in the day of Thy power, in the splendour of the Saints; from the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. Corpus Christi: CHRIST the LORD, a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek, offered bread and wine. Common of Apostles: II. Vespers. The LORD swears \* and will not repent. Thou art a Priest for ever.]

*Ambrosian.* [Christmas Day. From the womb \* before the morning star have I begotten Thee.]

*Mosarabic.* With Thee is the beginning in the day of Thy power.

The character of this Psalm, as a Messianic prophecy, has no parallel throughout the Psalter. In the case of all the others, even such as are most exalted in their language and imagery, or closest in detail to the incidents of the Gospel, there is always some historical groundwork, known or presumable, constituting the primary application of the poem, as in Psalms ii., xxii., xlv., lxxii. and lxxxix. But in this instance no such reference can be extracted by any ingenuity from the course of Israelite history. To take one point only, the union of the kingdom and priesthood in one person does not occur till the reign of John Hyrcanus, or perhaps his successor Aristobulus, and those eminent persons were, on the one hand, not descendants of David, nor on the other, priests of an order differing from the Aaronic, inasmuch as they were of the house of Phinehas. And the citation of the Psalm by Our LORD to the Pharisees establishes incontestably that in those days no idea that there was a past



Talmud  
Sanhedrin.

Genebrar-  
dus.

L.

S. Just.  
Mart. c.  
Tryph.  
xxxiii. 88.  
Tertull. c.  
Marcion.  
v. 9.  
S. Chrysost.  
R. Ishaki.  
De Muls.

2 Sam. vi. 17.  
18. comp.  
1 Chron.  
xvi. 1.  
1 Kings viii.  
14, 52.  
1 Sam. xvi.  
13.  
1 Kings i.  
24, 39.

1 Kings  
xviii. 33.  
1 Sam. vii.  
9.

Heb. v. 4.

historical application of it possible was current. No doubt existed then of the Davidic authorship, nor of the Messianic intention. The early Jewish testimonies to the latter of these facts are abundant and emphatic. Thus the Talmud quotes this Psalm to prove that "God placed King Messiah at His right hand;" so too in the Midrash Tehillim, no fewer than three times, the same use is made of it. Also R. Barachias, R. Jonathan, R. Moses Hadarschan, R. Moses Nachmanides, R. Levi, R. Saadiah Gaon, R. Simeon (who sees here the union of Jews and Gentiles in one realm under Messiah), the books Zohar and Bereshith Rabba, adopt the same view. But the exigencies of controversy soon drove the Jews to find another explanation, and, accordingly, in S. Justin Martyr's time the current Rabbinical view referred the Psalm to Hezekiah. Somewhat later, without actually abandoning this theory, they set up others, as that Abraham,<sup>1</sup> David, or Zerubbabel was intended; and that David is the object of the Psalm is the present most authoritative theory amongst them, defended by the argument of R. Kimchi and Aben-Ezra, that the title must be understood as meaning "A Psalm for, or concerning David." This is the opinion maintained by a school of modern criticism which represents David as having actually been the head of the Priesthood as well as of the temporal kingdom, as it is at least certain that he lifted the former out of the depressed condition into which it had sunk after the slaughter at Nob in Saul's reign, and that he reconstructed, amplified, and ritualized the Levitical ceremonial. But this very circumstance, when more closely examined, makes against the theory. All experience points to the fact that a powerful temporal ruler, when desirous to subject the religion of the State to his purposes, depresses, instead of exalting the priesthood, to avoid the chance of rivalry, as may be clearly seen in a remarkable example which at first seems to make the other way, the dealings of Louis XIV. with the Church of France; not to cite those of Peter the Great in Russia, far less of Henry VIII. or Elizabeth in England. There appears, no doubt, a highly religious sanction and character investing David and Solomon, who are described as the principal officiants at great religious festivals (though the words do not fairly imply that they were the actual ministers of sacrifice on such occasions), and in a less degree to Hezekiah and Josiah as religious reformers. But in the case of the two former monarchs, it is to be observed that they had both been anointed by persons recognized as seers, to wit, Samuel and Nathan, the latter of whom is expressly coupled with Zadok, the actual conferrer of Solomon's regal unction, and were thus regarded as having a specially sacred character, further increased by their own prophetic rank. But no trace of this ecclesiastical authority is discoverable in Saul, nor yet in Rehoboam or his successors, and the history of Uzziah teaches us that this is no accident, and we must therefore look to the Prophetic office, not the priestly one, as that which meets us in the case of David and Solomon. It is clear from the action of Elijah at Carmel, and perhaps from Samuel's conduct at an earlier date, that extraordinary representatives of God were not debarred from discharging sacerdotal functions, albeit they were of other tribes than Levi. The one matter of importance was, that no one should usurp this office; but a man undoubtedly "called of

<sup>1</sup> Because he is styled "My Lord" in Gen. xxiii. 6.



GOD," who was able to prove his commission by prophecy and miracle, could not be put on a footing with Korah or Uzziah. And hence we may fairly conclude that no claim to be a Priest was likely to be put forward by David himself, or by any one else on his behalf; while the further argument from the inapplicability of the lofty expressions of the first verse to him, is pressed by S. Peter in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost. The sixfold citation of the Psalm in the New Testament, thrice in the Gospels, once in the Acts, and twice in the Epistle to the Hebrews, (besides three additional references, distinct enough, though not verbal quotations,) gives it unusual prominence and importance, and has led to much ingenuity on the part of modern rationalists in order to avoid admission of its prophetic and Messianic character. In particular, it is argued against the use made of the Psalm by CHRIST, that in citing it as David's, and in the special sense in which He did so, He may either have employed the word David in the same technical and indeterminate sense which is still current when the phrase "Psalms of David" is used as equivalent to the Psalter; or Hemay have been simply accommodating Himself to the current view of the time, without in any way pledging Himself to its correctness, but taking the Pharisees on their own ground, and routing them there; or lastly, that as He has clearly stated that in His human nature He does not possess the faculty of omniscience, and was not habitually conscious of facts which did not come within the sphere of His human knowledge, He may therefore have erred on a point of literary criticism such as this. But the first and second of these views are contradicted by the singularly explicit language of one of the Gospel citations, where CHRIST says, "For David himself said by the HOLY GHOST, The LORD said unto my LORD," &c., words which cannot be diluted in any vague fashion. And as regards the third, those critics who, accepting the truth of CHRIST's Godhead, nevertheless advance the theory of His fallibility, confound two perfectly distinct ideas, limitation of knowledge, and error by reason of such limitation, albeit the one does not in the least connote or involve the other. There is no hint discoverable in the New Testament that CHRIST did not know perfectly and unerringly all that He professed to know, and there is only one point which He excludes from the compass of His knowledge, at the same time that He gives many details on the subject of which it is part which are undiscoverable by human investigation. But one difficulty connected with His use of the verse remains unsolved, that is, why His question should have put the Pharisees to silence; as the current Messianic theory of that day recognized Messiah as a lineal descendant of David, who was to surpass His ancestor in prowess, empire, and spiritual gifts; and it seems not a little strange that they should not have offered this solution of the question, as He does not here raise the far more important debate as to His own claim to be the Messiah. It may be that the key to this problem lies in the narrative of our LORD's trial before the Sanhedrim, for in reply to His saying, "Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God; God then said they all, Art Thou then the SON of GOD?" using a title which He had not employed, and charging Him with blasphemy S. Matt. for accepting it. Hence we may not unreasonably conjecture that at least some leading Rabbins may have reached that stage of the

Acts ii. 34.  
S. Matt.  
xxii. 43.  
S. Mark xii.  
36.  
S. Luke xx.  
42.  
Heb. i. 13;  
v. 6.  
1 Cor. xv.  
25.  
Heb. vii. 17,  
21.

S. Mark  
xiii. 32.

S. Mark xii.  
36.

S. Luke xxii.  
69.

S. Matt.  
xxvi. 65.



Messianic idea which recognized a divine element in the coming Prince of the House of David, some intimate union of Him with the Memra-Jahvêh, the WORD of GOD; while the remainder looked only for a temporal king and victor. And the object of the question would then be precisely analogous to St. Paul's availing himself of the rivalry between the Pharisees and Sadducees: namely, to force on the Rabbins an admission that they were not agreed amongst themselves on the character and prerogatives of Messiah, all-important as such an inquiry was, and had therefore no right to claim submission to their interpretation of Scripture, or to test orthodoxy thereby. It is precisely because the union of the kingly and priestly offices in Messiah is a phase in the gradual development of the whole doctrine of the Anointed One apparently much beyond the stage it had reached in the time of David, that historical doubts have been raised as to the date of this Psalm. But it is sufficiently evident that the Pharisees and the Apostles had by no means assimilated this particular tenet even after Psalm 110 had been, to say the least, some centuries in use, and therefore we are not entitled to do more than say that the prophecy in question, whenever delivered, had not seized hold of the national mind.

1 The LORD said unto my LORD: Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

C. The opening words of this revelation to the Psalmist, literally rendered, are, *the oracle of Jehovah unto my Lord, (Adoni,)* a sudden winging of the Prophet's flight to the loftiest mysteries of Divine contemplation, only to be paralleled by that like commencement, "In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was God." The FATHER saith unto the SON that which the one did not utter with the mouth, nor the other hear with the ear. The FATHER willeth, and the SON knoweth it; the SON willeth, and the FATHER knoweth it. The Rabbins, noticing the difference of the titles used, *Jehovah* and *Adon*, paraphrase thus: "The higher degree spake unto the lower, Sit thou on My right hand;" and hereupon also the Arians and Eunomians based an argument for the subordination of the SON. But the answer is, that the address is not to the Eternal WORD in respect of His Godhead, for then there would be no question of His dignity, but to Him incarnate in time, and therefore inferior to the FATHER as touching His manhood. And the Great Name itself is expressly attributed to CHRIST in Holy Writ, as *Jehovah-Tsidkenu*, "The LORD our Righteousness," when the doctrine of His Godhead is to be enforced. The Psalmist calls Him *my LORD*, by reason of His manhood, because He is our flesh and blood, our Brother, our very own in right of His Mother. Paternity does not except David from subjection to his Son, any more than in an elective monarchy, the citizen father of a new king can demand independence on the ground of relationship. *Sit Thou on My*

Acts xxiii. 6.

Thrapp.

S. John i. 1.

Zohar Gen. fol. 15, col. 139.  
Anastasius.  
Agellius.

Jer. xxiii. 6.

Hugo Card.



*right hand.* The first and obvious sense of these words has regard to the place of the chief minister of a kingdom at the right hand side of the king in council, whence the Arab title, "Vizir of the right hand," given to the *Radaſ*, or first officer of state. But that a still higher application of the phrase is possible, in the case of a son associated by his father in the sovereignty, cannot be disputed. And in truth an argument against the Arians was based on this very fact. At a time (A.D. 385) when the leaders of that heresy were exceedingly powerful, and great efforts were being made to secure the patronage of the State for them, S. Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium, headed a deputation of Catholic prelates to Theodosius the Great, to counteract the scheme. The young Arcadius, who had been lately proclaimed Augustus by his father, was seated beside the Emperor, but the aged Bishop omitted him altogether when paying the customary marks of respect to the sovereign. Theodosius, believing this to be an oversight, desired the Saint to salute Arcadius. The old man drew near, and caressed the boy, saying, "Good day, my son." Theodosius, much incensed, and thinking that an insult was intended, gave orders that the Bishop should be driven out of the hall of audience, but he, turning to the Emperor as the guards were about to execute the mandate, cried out, "See, Emperor, you cannot bear any disrespect shown to your son, but are exceedingly wroth with those that are insolent to him. Believe then that Almighty God also hateth them that blaspheme His Only-begotten Son, and is indignant with them for their ingratitude towards their SAVIOUR and benefactor." And Theodosius, struck by the cogency of the argument, withdrew his protection from the Arians and Eunomians. That this notion of association in the kingdom is in fact the fullest sense of the Psalm appears from the similar prophetic language of Daniel: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." And Our Lord Himself twice refers to this prophecy, once to His disciples, saying, "They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory;" and again, before the High Priest, where He comprises the language of the Psalmist and of the Prophet in one sentence: "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." The word *set* itself

A.  
Honorius.

Eichhorn.

Theodoret.  
Hist. Eccl.  
v. 16.

Dan. vii. 13.

S. Matt.  
xxvi. 64.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Perowne, in his note on this verse, observes as follows: "Similarly the Greek poets spoke of their Gods as *σίδεσποι*, *τὰδεσποι*, *σίδεσποροι* with Zeus. So Pindar (*Fragm.* Ed. Schneider, p. 55.)



- C. denotes, observe some of the commentators, the human nature of CHRIST, inasmuch as sitting cannot be predicated of the incorporeal Godhead, and in contrast to the prominence of standing, it implies His present invisibility. *Sit Thou*, not only on high, but also in secret, exalted that Thou mayest rule, hidden that Thou mayest be the object of belief. For what reward could there be for faith, unless that which we believe were hid? But that reward of faith is to behold that which we believed before seeing it. And it also denotes His perfect rest after all His sufferings, in contrast to the time when "being wearied with His journey," He sat upon the well of Sychar, and still more to that when He was exalted on the painful throne of the Cross, so that He whom the Synagogue, and also His Virgin Mother called *Benoni*, "Son of my sorrow," is called by His FATHER *Benjamin*, "Son of My right hand." *Sit Thou*, rest Thyself beside Me, rule with Me, reign, enjoy My glory, be nearest unto Me, be partaker of My good things, My power and majesty, be above every virtue and principality, be superior to all created things, be close to Me in the highest, mightiest, and most honoured place, reign with Me in equal power, as to Godhead, with like and nearest as to Thy manhood, exercising all power in heaven and earth. *Until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool*. The word *until* is not infrequently used in Scripture without implying cessation when the point of time indicated as future has been reached. Thus we meet such expressions as "I will not leave thee, *until* I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." "There shall no man be able to stand before thee, *until* thou have destroyed them." "His heart will not shrink, *until* he have seen his desire upon his enemies;" and above all, "And knew her not *until* she had brought forth her first-born Son." But in this particular instance there is a comment which plainly shows that a limit of time is intended. S. Paul, speaking of the Second Advent,

S. John iv. 6.

Ay.

Gen. xxxv.  
18. S. Athanasius.  
Genebrardus.

S. Matt.  
xxviii. 18.  
De Muis.

Gen. xxviii.  
15.  
Deut. vii. 24.  
Ps. cxli. 8.

C.  
S. Matt. i.  
25.

speaks of Minerva as associated with Zeus in his sovereignty, and receiving his commands from the other gods: *δεξιαν κατὰ χεῖρα τοῦ πατρὸς καθήμενην, τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῖς θεοῖς ἀποδέχασθαι* [sitting at the right hand of the Father, to receive his commands for the gods] on which Aristides observes that Minerva was *ἀγγέλου μείζων*, [greater than an angel] and that she *τῶν ἀγγέλων ἄλλοις ἄλλα ἐπιτάττει, πρώτη παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς παραλαμβάνουσα* [gives various orders to various angels or messengers, receiving them first herself from the Father.] And Callimachus

(Hymn. in Apoll. ver. 28,) says that Apollo is able to reward the Chorus if they sing to please him, because he sits at the right hand of Zeus, *δύναται γὰρ, ἐρεῖ Διὶ δεξιὸς ἵσται*. In both these passages it is clear that this session at the right hand of Zeus indicates not merely a mark of honour conferred, but actual participation of the royal dignity and power." He might have strengthened this by pointing out that both Minerva (or rather Pallas Athena) and Apollo embody, in Greek mythology, the idea of Divine Wisdom.



tells us: "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to GOD, even the FATHER; when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith, All things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the SON also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that GOD may be all in all." On this text two insufficient and hasty conclusions have been based, either that CHRIST's Manhood will then be entirely absorbed in His Godhead, or else that He will cease to bear rule, whereas it is said of Him, "Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever." The true meaning is that His mediatorial office, and task of administering the government of the Church Militant will then cease; as there will be no more sin requiring His priestly intercession, no more war demanding His invincible leadership. His enemies, evil spirits and wicked men, shall be made His footstool, whether trodden in His anger, and trampled in His fury, as in the case of the finally impenitent, or voluntarily humbling themselves to "worship at His footstool, for He is holy," as in that of returning sinners. The figure is taken from the usage of Eastern conquerors; of which, besides the Scriptural example of Joshua and the five confederate kings, two noteworthy instances are recorded in history. First is that of Sapor, king of Persia, whose custom it was, whenever about to mount his horse or his chariot, to cause the captive Emperor Valerian to be led forth, chained, but also clad in the purple and other imperial insignia, and to be made lie down on his face upon the ground, when the insulting victor used him as a step by which to mount into his seat, treading on the captive's head or back, and alleging that such a real triumph was worth all the Roman paintings of imaginary victories. The second instance, almost exactly parallel, is that of the treatment of Sultan Bayazid by Tamerlane. Note too that the FATHER says: *Until I put Thine enemies under Thy feet*, not as implying that the SON cannot do it for Himself, since whatever the FATHER doeth, the SON doeth likewise, but because this is part of the SON's reward, in so far as He is man, for His obedience, "Wherefore GOD also hath highly exalted Him." By reason of the close union between the members and their Head, we may read this Psalm of the victory of any Saint of GOD, set at His right hand in the judgment, and given victory over all his foes. And that we may attain this triumph in the world to come, we must sit at CHRIST's right hand here too in rectitude of intention, avoiding all sinister doings, for "a wise man's heart is at his right hand, but a fool's heart is at his left," but sitting, by persevering in holiness, by humility, by calmness and tranquillity in prosperity

1 Cor. xv. 24.

L.

Ps. xlv. 7.

Isa. lxviii. 3.

C.

Ps. xcix. 5. A.V.

Josh. x. 24.

Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs.

Bellarmine.

Phil. ii. 9.

Hugo Card.

Le Blanc.

Eccles. x. 2.



S. Luke x.  
39. and in trouble : sitting, like Mary of Bethany, at the feet of Jesus, to hear His Word.

2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy power out of Sion : be thou ruler, even in the midst among thine enemies.

Isa. xl. 1.  
Theodoret. CHRIST is Himself the "Rod out of the stem of Jesse," but as He in His Manhood went forth not from *Sion*, but from Bethlehem, the expositors prefer to take the words generally of the Gospel Law, preached first from Jerusalem, and more specially of the Cross, the sceptre of CHRIST'S Kingdom, His "strong staff and beautiful rod," wherewith He, as with a bar of iron, bruises His opponents to make their hearts contrite, wherewith He, by the hands of His Apostles, subdued the world. A rod of greater power this than the one which Moses wielded, for that did but part the sea, while this one brake in pieces the wickedness of the world; it converted sea and land, and filled them with mighty power, beginning at Jerusalem, "for out of Sion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem." So runs the hymn :

The Hymn,  
*Salve crux,  
arbor.*

Crux est nostræ  
Libra justitiæ,  
Sceptrum regis,  
Virga potentis.

The Cross is the balance  
Of all our right,  
The sceptre of kingship,  
The rod too of might.

R. *Be Thou ruler, even in the midst among Thine enemies*, extending Thy dominion gradually over all the unbelievers who surround Thee and Thy Church on every side, Jews, Pagans, heretics, and false brethren alike, till Thou rulest even in their *midst*, in the very hearts of those who were once Thy bitterest foes. And therefore it is said, *Rule*, not *slay*, because the Kingdom of CHRIST is enlarged not by the destruction, but by the conversion of sinners. And of this a token was given when He, surrounded by His enemies as He hung upon the Cross, bore even in that hour of supreme humiliation the kingly title over His head, and converted the thief and the centurion in the very act of His dying.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.

Le Blanc.

3 In the day of thy power shall the people offer thee free-will offerings with an holy worship : the dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning.

This exceedingly difficult verse is so variously treated by



different expositors by reason of its obscurity, that it is necessary to set forth in full some of the diverse renderings before proceeding to annotate it. First let us take the A.V. (1) *Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning* [or, *more than the womb of the morning*,] *Thou hast* [or, *shalt have*] *the dew of Thy youth*. Modern critics take it thus, with but little deviation, (2) *Thy people are ready volunteers in Thy battle-day* [literally, *army-day*] *in holy vestments* [or, according to a variant here, *on the holy hills*;] <sup>1</sup> *from the womb of the dawn Thou hast Thy young men* [like] *dew*. The LXX. and Vulgate have, (3) *With Thee* [is] *the beginning* [LXX. rule, ἀρχή] *in the day of Thy power, in the splendours of the Saints, from the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee*.<sup>2</sup> The Syriac, combining some of the peculiarities of all these, reads, (4) *Thy people shall be glorious in the day of power; in the beauties of holiness I have begotten Thee, as a youth, from the womb of old time*. There are additional varieties created by other versions, but these are enough as specimens. Let us then take first that which seems to be the most exact rendering of the Hebrew, (2.) We have pictured before us, in this wise, the same wonderful vision as that which the Beloved Disciple beheld in Patmos, when he "saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness doth He judge and make war. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." It is the gathering together of the hosts of the LORD for the combat against sin, of whom is said, as of those ten thousand who went down from Tabor with Barak against Jabin, that they "willingly offered themselves" for the avenging of Israel; willingly, because of the voluntary pledges in Baptism, when they were clad in the holy vesture of purity and grace (reminding us of that army of British Christians which, arrayed in the white chrisom-robcs, routed the heathen hordes of Picts in the famous Alleluia battle,) and put on the whole armour of God. These flow together to the standard of the King like drops of *dew from the womb of the morning*, because the propagation of the Faith is silent, unseen, unheard, not in the full blaze of morn, but in the milder light of dawn, as the Daystar arises in the hearts of men; and also because of the countless multitudes of the Saints, who can no more be numbered than the minute drops of the dew; and yet more because dew is a gift of God, not a thing which man can obtain at his will, for it is written, "And the remnant of

Rev. xix. 11,  
14.

Judg. v. 2.

Conf. 2 Sam.  
xvii. 11, 12.

<sup>1</sup> תַּיִת instead of תַּיִת, a variant found in many MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Reading תַּיִת, I have be-

gotten, instead of תַּיִת, thy youth.



- Mic. v. 7. Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men; since it is true of the sons of God, the young warriors who join His great host, that they "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." They are at once warriors and priests, like their Master, Who is King and Priest too; and they can maintain their fight only so long as they are self-dedicated with priestly hallowing; while, on the other hand, priests can maintain their purity only so long as they are actively engaged in combat. Not only here on earth, but in the glory of the Resurrection, the elect of CHRIST shall be quickened by His heavenly dew, as it is
- S. John i. 13. Kay. written, "Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead." Such appears to be the true mystical meaning of this abstruse verse, though the word *youth* may also be taken as singular; and thus the phrase, *Thou hast the dew of Thy youth*, will refer to the perennial vigour of CHRIST. But the exegesis of the Greek and Latin Fathers is necessarily quite different, and dwells mainly on the doctrine of the eternal generation of the SON of GOD.
- Neander, Mem. of Christian Life, 4. S. Epiphanius. S. Athanasius. S. Cyril. Hierosol. S. Hieron. &c. S. Chrysost. *With Thee*, O LORD, paraphrases a great Eastern Saint, is the *dominion*, (*ἀρχή*) not accidental, and bestowed on Thee in time, not depending on an army, soldiers, or wealth, but inherent in Thee by nature, *in the day of Thy power*, when taking flesh upon Thee, Thou shalt give many proofs of Thy power and might, and that *in the splendours of the Saints*, when Thou shalt give light unto the world by the beauty and radiance of Thine Apostles and disciples; or when Thou shalt come to judgment and display Thy force and power in marvellous fashion, and make the splendour of Thine arising Saints brighter than that of the sun, not in one form and measure, but manifold; and therefore it is said *splendours*, not *splendour*, for one star differeth from another star in glory. And it is not incredible that such exalted power should be in Thee, nor is it alien from Thy nature and essence, seeing Thou art consubstantial with Me, and partaker of the same nature, seeing that *I begat Thee from the womb before the morning star*, that is, before the morning star was created, I produced Thee by true generation; denoting thereby, as another Greek Father observes, that CHRIST is before all time, and of the same nature with the FATHER. And in this sense the word *womb*, in its strictness inapplicable, yet denotes that the Sonship of CHRIST is not adoptive, but natural and inherent. Other Easterns, following the versions of Aquila and Symmachus, very nearly that of the Prayer Book, see here a reference to the Immaculate Conception of CHRIST, born of the womb of Blessed Mary by the operation of the HOLY GHOST descending upon her as the dew on Gideon's
- Isa. xxvi. 19. S. Epiphanius. S. Athanasius. S. Cyril. Hierosol. S. Hieron. &c. S. Chrysost. Theodoret. S. Epiphanius. Z. Eusebius. Hesychius.



fleece. His birth was in the splendours of the Saints because of the glorious vision of those angelic hosts which proclaimed His nativity to the shepherds of Bethlehem.

The Latin Fathers, owing to the additional error by which the LXX. ἀρχή (itself no exact, though a possible rendering of נִרְבוֹת, *free-will offerings*), was translated *principium*, *beginning*, instead of *principatus*, *dominion*, have departed yet further from the Hebrew. The explanation of S. Augustine is that the *Beginning* means the Eternal FATHER, as the Source of all things, even of the SON and the HOLY GHOST, and that His union with the SON, always perfect, though hidden, will be disclosed and revealed in the day of the SON's power at the Judgment, amidst the glories of the risen Saints, and he takes the last clause of the verse to denote not only the eternal generation of the WORD before the creation of the stars of heaven, but also the miraculous birth of CHRIST in the early morning of Christmas Day, or as others will have it, of her "who looketh forth as the morning" in her beauty and purity.

A.

Eusebius.  
Lyranus.

4 The LORD sware, and will not repent : thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

To this verse, the central revelation of the oracular Psalm of which it is a part, we possess the inestimable key of an Apostolic comment. First, on the opening words, *The Lord sware*, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews dwells on the exceeding solemnity of this rite of inauguration, distinguishing CHRIST from the Aaronic ministry: "For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by Him that said unto Him, The LORD sware and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek; by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament." Next he emphasises the words *for ever*, as forming another ground of distinction: "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood: wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." And thirdly, the mystical character of Melchizedek, and his superiority over Abraham himself, are pointed out, in that his name and office indicate him as King of Righteousness and King of Peace, as being a type of an eternal Priest having no earthly origin, no beginning nor ending, and that as receiving tithes from the ancestor of Levi, he must of necessity rank above the Levitical priesthood, which can have no rights superior to those which it inherited by reason of the appropriation to it of a special part of the promises made to Abraham by God; and therefore, being himself a Gentile, and yet

L.

Heb. vii. 21.

Heb. vii. 23.

Heb. vii. 2.



ranking above the Jews, Melchizedek typifies that King and Priest Who should be the Ruler and Pontiff of a Church made up of both Jew and Gentile, of universal extent. Bearing in mind the express statement of the Pentateuch that "Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God;" the ancient Rabbins, holding him to be a type of the Messiah, taught that in the days of the latter there should be no sacrifice known save that of bread and wine, to the exclusion of all animal oblations. Hence the obvious reference to the Eucharistic Sacrifice is common to the Fathers of East and West from the earliest to the latest times, and it would be superfluous to multiply quotations with the end of establishing so simple a proposition.<sup>1</sup>

Gen. xiv.  
18.

Lyrannus.  
Tostatus.  
Genebrardus.

The Hymn,  
*Hoste dum  
victo tri-  
umphans.*

When the Patriarch was returning  
Crowned with triumph from the fray,  
Him the peaceful King of Salem  
Came to meet upon his way;  
Meekly bearing Bread and Wine,  
Holy Priesthood's awful sign.

On the truth thus dimly shadowed,  
Later days a lustre shed;  
When the Great High Priest eternal,  
Under forms of Wine and Bread,  
For the world's immortal Food  
Gave His Flesh, and gave His Blood.

Wondrous Gift!—the Word Who moulded  
All things by His might divine,  
Bread to be His Body maketh,  
And His very Blood the Wine;  
What though sense no change perceives,  
Faith admires, adores, believes!

<sup>1</sup> It is to be noticed that some controversialists, anxious to avoid the conclusion forced on us by this verse, argue that Melchizedek was merely bringing food for the refreshment of Abraham's retainers, and not performing a sacrifice. But this view is refuted by Gen. xiv. 24, wherein Abraham, saying, "Save only that which the young men have eaten" of the spoil, shows that they had made their repast before their encounter with the Priest-King: while others dwell on the silence as to this point in the Epistle to the Hebrews, forgetting that the writer

himself supplies the key to his omission, saying, "Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek, of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing," and telling them that he cannot give them the "strong meat," whence S. Jerome (ad Evagr.) declares that he was unwilling to expose the Sacrament to their unbelief. And the mystery in which it was shrouded by the early Church is matter of notoriety, and is illustrated by the very cautious hint S. Augustine lets fall in his comment on this very verse.



He Who once to die a Victim  
 On the Cross, did not refuse,  
 Day by day, upon our altars,  
 That same Sacrifice renews ;  
 Through His holy Priesthood's hands,  
 Faithful to His last commands !

While the people all uniting  
 In that Sacrifice sublime,  
 Offer CHRIST to His High FATHER,  
 Offer up themselves with Him ;  
 Then together with the Priest,  
 On the living Victim feast !

5 The LORD upon thy right hand : shall wound  
 even kings in the day of his wrath.

The Psalmist here directs his words to the Eternal FATHER, at Whose right hand is the *Lord (Adonai)* CHRIST Who is to do these wondrous things, so that although many kings of the earth may conspire against His priesthood, and endeavour to overthrow His Church, yet He will rout them, as in truth He did those Pagan emperors who strove throughout the ten persecutions to blot out the very name of Christians, and as He will do again in the Last Day. S. Chrysostom, however, and the other Greek fathers, followed by not a few Latins, with several modern critics, assume the *Lord* of this verse to be the FATHER,<sup>1</sup> and explain the apparent discrepancy of the session of the king on the right hand of God, in the first verse, and the converse standing of God at the king's right here, as being no real contradiction, but denoting two distinct conditions, the one pointing to the king's exaltation in time of peace, the other to the divine aid given him in the day of battle ; while the closeness of connection between JEHOVAH and the King is such that each does what the other does, and there is thus no specially abrupt transition, even were that what it by no means is, an unusual thing in Hebrew poetry. Both interpretations, therefore, are fairly open, and practically converge in the same idea.

A.  
 Bellarmine.  
 Cocceius.

Agellius.  
 Hupfeld.  
 Ewald.  
 C.

6 He shall judge among the heathen ; he shall  
 fill the places with the dead bodies : and smite in  
 sunder the heads over divers countries.

<sup>1</sup> A critical argument in favour of this view is that the plural form *אֲדֹנָי*, *Adonai*, here found, is limited in the Bible to God, and is never given to Messiah. But S. John xii. 48, explains the *Adonai* of Isaiah vi.

1, to be CHRIST, Who is *Elohim* in Ps. xlv. 6, and *Jehovah* in Jer. xxiii. 6 ; while, conversely, God is called *Adoni* (a title of Messiah in this Psalm) in Zech. iv. 13. There is thus not much weight in it.



- Besides the ambiguity as to the Person here intended, common to this verse with the preceding, there is a further divergence of interpretation, as to the time of fulfilment of this prediction. Some of the Greek Fathers take it to be the Day of Judgment, a view which squares exactly enough with more than one passage of the Apocalypse; while others, and most of the Latins, following the lead of S. Augustine, prefer to understand it of the dealings of God and CHRIST with the enemies of the Church in this world. And they take the verse almost unanimously in the mildest sense, explaining the Vulgate reading (which is, *He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the ruins, He shall dash to pieces the heads in the land of many*) as denoting His work in the conversion of souls. They explain the first clause of CHRIST's rule over Jews and Gentiles alike; not judging them, but judging and overthrowing Satan's power among them; the second of His restoration of His ruined Sion, whether by building up again those who level themselves low in humility, or by filling up anew with ransomed men the heavenly ranks left vacant by the fall of the rebel angels; while the last paragraph is taken as meaning that He makes Himself the one Head, overthrowing all rivals, whether evil spirits or human self-will, which set up many heads other than Himself in the world. But the Hebrew undoubtedly depicts the carnage of a victorious battle, with great piles of dead bodies lying on the battle-field, and single headless corpses strewed here and there, marking where a fugitive had been overtaken and slain in the widespread rout. The last clause, however, may with much probability be translated, *He hath smitten through [him that was] head over a wide land*, just as in another place we read, "Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages," and in that case the mystical import will be that the Divine Conqueror not only overcomes lesser forms of evil, but inflicts a deadly wound upon the head of all, the old dragon, who was once prince of this world.
- Theodore. Z.  
S. Chrysost. Rev. xi. 18;  
xix. 21.  
A.  
C.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.  
Hesychius.  
R.  
Honorius.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Cocceius.  
Hab. iii. 14.

7 He shall drink of the brook in the way : therefore shall he lift up his head.

- Here there is no doubt as to the person intended. The Rabbins and those modern critics who agree with them in taking the two previous verses as spoken of God only, admit that the King is again brought on the scene in this last verse. The literalist notion is obviously that he is "faint, yet pursuing," but that he may not "die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised," he stoops for a moment to drink of an opportune stream in his road, and immediately rises up again with renewed vigour and uplifted crest, to continue the chase till the last invading foeman is driven across the frontier in total rout.
- Cocceius.  
Hupfeld.  
Ewald.  
Judges viii.  
4; xv. 18.



There is absolute unanimity in the broad outline of the mystical interpretation, amidst some variety of minor detail, inasmuch as all take the verse to denote CHRIST's humiliation followed by His exaltation. For *brook* the LXX. and Vulgate both read *torrent*, that is, an intermittent water-course temporarily swollen by storms which bring down the rains from the hills. And this is explained as typifying the hurried, turbid, noisy, yet brief course of human life, to which the LORD bowed Himself by His Incarnation, from His throne on the right hand of the FATHER; drinking of the troubles of our mortal condition, truly *in the way*, for He was a stranger and pilgrim on earth, far from His country: nay, going down by His Passion into the lowest depths of the torrent, so as not to drink for refreshment and pleasure, but swallowing the waters like a drowning man, so that "they came in, even unto His soul;" when His head was lifted up on the Cross as He drank the last drops of that cup which His FATHER had given Him, and for His obedience thus carried out, GOD also hath highly exalted Him, first in the Resurrection, and then in the Ascension, and hath given Him a Name which is above every name. The Chaldee, which here paraphrases, "He shall drink wisdom out of the mouth of the Prophet," supplies us with a key to the tropological sense; which is that Christians derive all their strength and refreshment from the waters of the mystical Rock which follows them, so as to be always *in the way*, accessible along the road of their pilgrimage to the very end, supplying its living streams of holiness. And a recent commentator very aptly cites in illustration a saying of one of the early synods of the Gallican Church: "Whatever of truth and righteousness man has, is from that fountain, after which we in this desert ought to thirst, in order that, bedewed as it were with a few drops from it, we may not faint in the way."

Bellarmine.

Odo Aet.

Ps. lxxix. 1.

Phil. ii. 9.

Targum.

Kay.  
Conc. II.  
Arausic.  
Can. 22.

Wherefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, Who hath said unto my LORD, Sit Thou on My right hand; glory be to the SON, my LORD, Who is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the heavenly dew of our youth.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

## COLLECTS.

O GOD, begotten before the morning star, Who wast before the beginning of every creature, we pray and beseech Thee that as Thou, sitting at the right hand of the FATHER, hast put Thine enemies under Thy feet, so Thou mayest make us meet for Thy service, doing away with the dominion of sin. (5.)

Ludolph.

Almighty GOD, FATHER of Glory, Who hast raised from the dead our LORD JESUS CHRIST, setting Him at Thy right

Mozarabic.



hand above every principality and power; arouse in us the love of all manner of holiness, that the first-fruits of our spirits may be assigned to Him alone, Who arising from the dead overcame with His own might the power of death. (11.)

D. C. JESU, SAVIOUR of the world, made for ever a King and Priest after the order of Melchizedek, set us, of Thine unspeakable mercy, at Thy right hand in the Judgment, and numbering us amongst the blessed of Thy FATHER, cause us to possess the kingdom of heaven. (5.)

## PSALM CXI.

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

### ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST bestows the spiritual food of His Word on them that suffer hunger. The Voice of the Church concerning CHRIST, with praise. Of penitence with praise.

VEN. BEDA. His people praiseth the LORD, because freed from the destruction of the world, it knows not how to endure the slavery of sins. This is the first Psalm with the Hebrews which goes through the whole course of the Alphabet, although there are many persons who suppose that other previous ones are written in alphabetical order, for in them there are either some missing or some superfluous letters, and sometimes when one verse is short, another is extended to inordinate length.<sup>1</sup> Whence I imagine that this arises rather from the observation of readers than the intention of the writer. And further, the Seventy translators, because some scruple arose in them, did not choose to insert the Hebrew letters in their version.

The nation of the blessed gathered from various parts of the world, at the first outset of the Psalm saith that it confesseth unto the LORD in the congregation of the righteous, where laud is everlasting, and praise without end: *I will confess unto Thee, O Lord.* Secondly, it says that the faithful have been satisfied with an abundant gift, promising at the same time the Advent of the LORD, that they may search after the promised inheritance with most eager intentness: *He hath made a memorial of His mercies.* Thirdly, it declares that Christians have been redeemed, in the New Testament hallowed by everlasting grace: *He sent redemption unto His people.* The first part contains six letters: the second ten: the third, six. And just as little children are taught by letters that they may advance to wisdom, so psalms of this kind

<sup>1</sup> This observation of Beda is in the main correct. This really is the first accurately alphabetic Psalm, and moreover one in which the verses are carefully

adjusted to consist each of about the same number of words. The same holds good of Psalm 112, obviously the fellow of this one.



are given to the uninstructed and beginners, that their first attempts may be guided, as though with certain rudiments.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. Concerning the excellency of the works of GOD, and enjoining us to give thanks unto CHRIST. Spoken in the person of the Apostles.

EUSEBIUS OF CESAREA. A thanksgiving to CHRIST.

S. ATHANASIUS. A psalm having a mingled confession, and a narrative with praise.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* Sunday and Festivals: Vespers. [Corpus Christi: Vespers.]

*Ambrosian.* Sunday: Vespers. [Christmas Day: II. Nocturn.]

*Parisian.*  
*Lyons.*  
*Quignon.* } Sunday: Vespers.

#### ANTIPHONS.

The same rule holds for the Festival Antiphons of this Psalm as for the preceding.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* Sunday: Faithful \* are all His commandments: established for ever and ever. [Christmas Day: Redemption \* the LORD hath sent unto His people, He hath commanded His covenant for ever. Corpus Christi: The merciful LORD hath given meat to them that fear Him \* in remembrance of His marvels.]

*Ambrosian.* Great are the works \* of the LORD. [Christmas Day: Redemption \* the LORD hath sent unto His people. Kyr. Kyr.]

*Parisian and Lyons.* As *Gregorian*.

*Mozarabic.* The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom \* a good understanding have all they that do thereafter.

1 [Alleluia.] I will give thanks unto the LORD ☩  
with my whole heart: secretly among the faithful, ☩  
and in the congregation.

That man gives thanks unto the LORD with his *whole heart* Agellius.  
who does so unfeignedly, and not for any present advantage  
or gain, but heartily and entirely, for he who praises God  
with half his heart, is deceitful, and not single-hearted. We  
ought not then to praise Him with one part of us, and allow  
the other to incline to sin; lest while we are lifting one foot  
of the soul up to holiness, we should suffer the other to remain  
in the mire of sin. *Secretly among the faithful.* This is  
rather a paraphrase than the precise translation, which is in the  
council of the upright, but the Hebrew word מִן for council  
also means *secret*, implying a small number of trusty advisers  
distinct from and higher than the general congregation. And  
thus the notion implied is that of conversing with those of  
tried piety and wisdom on the deeper mysteries of the Faith,  
while joining also in the public worship of the less instructed  
Anon. Græc. Agellius.



A. flock. S. Augustine accordingly explains the former term  
 C. as denoting the college of the Apostles, the latter as designating the whole Church; and his exposition is generally followed, with the extension of the *council* to all able teachers of righteousness. Cardinal Hugo, looking to the word *confess*, suggests that we have in this verse a recommendation to choose wise and pious confessors to guide us in holiness, and then to make full and public satisfaction in presence of the Church for any faults we have committed.

2 The works of the LORD are great : sought out  
 of all them that have pleasure therein.

R. Kimchl. This is the true sense of the passage, signifying that eager zeal in the study of the deep things of God which characterizes His true followers. And that because, as a Saint teaches us, knowledge goes before the cultivation of virtue, because no one can heartily desire that of which he is ignorant, nor can he fear an evil unless it be known. Another interpretation, which comes practically to the same thing, translates the second clause, *sought out because of all their pleasantness*, which may be especially taken of the words and acts of CHRIST when He was in bodily presence on earth. But the LXX. and Vulgate turn the clause, *sought out for all His wills*; that is, that every part of creation, everything which exists, has its divinely appointed task and place in working out some purpose of God; and that even in the case of such things as seem most adverse to Him, man's free-will, sickness, sin, death, and the like, they do but carry out His higher designs. All God's works, both of the first and second creation, of nature and of grace, are great; but a favourite application of every verse of this Psalm to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, has made some commentators dwell on it here particularly, as that which has been devised by His love for the sanctification of men. And we then get another sense of *for all His wills*, that such works of God as this and other acts of His grace, dispose all devout and wise persons to do His will with all their might.

Z.

3 His work is worthy to be praised, and had in  
 honour : and his righteousness endureth for ever.

Honorius. Here the LXX. and Vulgate read in the first clause, *Confession and magnificence are His work*. And they take it as well in the literal sense of the glorious beauty of creation, affording matter for our acknowledgment and praise of His power, as in a more spiritual sense: namely, that the conversion of sinners, leading them to confession of their own sins, and of the glory of the Holy Trinity (as in the case of S.

Bellarmino.

C. Arnobius. Hugo Card.



Paul,) together with the bright purity of soul (and in some cases the shining gifts of miraculous power) vouchsafed to penitents, are God's work, not man's; spring from His love and grace, not from their strength and merit; and then His *righteousness*, whereby He rewards such confession and magnificence, *endureth for ever*, in that His promises can never fail, His justifying grace cannot be overruled, His sentence at the Last Day is irrevocable, whether for the doomed or the blessed.

A.

4 The merciful and gracious LORD hath so done; his marvellous works : that they ought to be had in remembrance.

The Prayer Book here misses the force of the Hebrew, nor is the A.V. more exact. The LXX. and Vulgate are precisely right in translating, *He hath made a memorial of His wonderful works*. Yet this may be taken, if considered apart from the succeeding verse, as denoting much what the Prayer Book version suggests, that God's dealings with His people and against their enemies were so conspicuous and memorable, as well in the days of the Patriarchs, Judges, and Kings of Israel as in those of the Apostles and Martyrs of CHRIST, that they became a monument for the gaze and instruction of posterity. But when we carry on our eyes to the succeeding words, we come to a yet deeper meaning:

Pseudo-  
Chrysost.  
Z.

5 He hath given meat unto them that fear him : he shall ever be mindful of his covenant.

The word *memorial* in the previous verse is *זִכָּר*, that which is used of the Passover in Exodus xii. 14 and xiii. 9, which gives us one reference to the *meat* here mentioned, while there is, in all probability, a further allusion to the manna in the wilderness; for the word *לֶחֶם*, here translated *meat*, is more exactly rendered in the A.V. margin as *prey*: either spoil in battle, or more probably, the flesh of beasts taken in hunting, of course in uninhabited places like the wilderness. Hence we have, as the idea present to the mind of the Psalmist, the great Festivals of the Jewish Church, and the feast on the attendant sacrifices, (which may very well be called "prey" in the sense of being the produce of a land conquered by force of Hebrew valour in old time), the food given to the worshippers, whose share in the service proved their fear of God. And thus we come at once to the sense followed by all the greatest Christian expositors, that we have here a prophecy of the Holy Eucharist, of which its Founder spake, saying, "Offer this for a Memorial of

Delitzsch.

Theodoret.

S. Luke  
xxii. 19.



- A.  
L. Me;<sup>1</sup> a gift which none could have bestowed save a merciful and gracious LORD. Nor does the word "prey" make this application less suitable, for in that adorable mystery we proclaim the death of CHRIST, remembering how His persecutors pursued Him upon the mountains, and laid wait for Him in the wilderness, till "the breath of our nostrils, the Anointed of the LORD, was taken in their pits," and given to us thenceforward to be our food, "for wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." Or, if we take "prey" as the spoil in battle, so this holy banquet, like the bread and wine Melchizedek gave to victorious Abraham, is meant only for those that overcome their spiritual foes. And as He fulfilled His covenant to Abraham and Moses, in giving the land of Canaan to the children of Israel, so, because the cup of this most holy Sacrament is the New Covenant in His Blood, He is reminded of His promises in that Testament every time we celebrate the Christian Sacrifice, of His oath to us to give us a better country, where we shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of our FATHER, be as the Angels of God, and because servants of CHRIST, be where He is also.
- Lam. iv. 19, 20.  
S. Matt. xxiv. 28.  
Cd. Hugo Card. S. Luke xxii. 20.  
D. C.

2 6 He hath showed his people the power of his works : that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.

- Genebrardus. The first reference is to the ejection of the seven nations from Palestine before the face of Israel, aided by the mighty hand of God; and then, by a simple and obvious transition, the words denote the subjugation of the heathen to the law of CHRIST, by the spreading of His Church; and finally, they mean the conquest of heaven by the Saints, and their occupation of those seats whence the rebel angels fell. In connection with the previous verse, and still keeping to the idea of the Holy Eucharist, we may remember, on the one hand, that the memorial character of that sacred rite causes it to bring before us all the power of the LORD's work in His Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension, besides the spiritual miracle of change wrought upon the elements themselves; while in its strengthening properties, as conveying to us the grace and might of CHRIST, it makes us vigorous enough to take the kingdom of heaven by storm. A reference to the power of CHRIST displayed in the Resurrection, is the probable reason of the Anglican use of this Psalm on Easter Day.
- C.  
Le Blanc.  
P. S. Chrysost. S. Thomas Aquin. Summ. iii. 79, 1.  
Ay.

2 7 The works of his hands are verity and judgment :  
2 all his commandments are true.

<sup>1</sup> τοῦτο ΠΟΙΕΙΤΕ εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἈΝΑΜΝΗΣΙΝ; familiar liturgical phrases of sacrifice.



Here again the first reference is to the punishment of the Canaanites: and God's dealings with them, in depriving them of their settlements and transferring them to another people, are vindicated on the score of justice; because the seven nations had transgressed His plainest commandments, such as are familiar even to natural religion, and therefore God, after enumerating the horrible crimes which were prevalent amongst them, spake to Israel by Moses: "Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these things the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity of the land upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants." And in His conquest of the heathen by His Church the same rule holds, for although He suffered His martyrs to be haled to prison and to judgment, yet His truth prevailed by that very persecution, so as to become known and dear to countless thousands. His work in the soul is *truth*, in teaching us to love that which is right and holy; it is *judgment*, in showing us how to sit in trial upon our doings, and to condemn our sins. And He will show His *verity* again in the Last Day by rewarding according to His most true promise them that have kept His commandments faithfully, and His *judgment* by condemning such as have continued obstinately in rebellion against Him. One commentator tells us that we have the method of true penitence, which is God's commandment, set forth plainly in the first clause of this verse: *verity*, implying candour of the mouth in acknowledgment of our sins; *judgment*, the genuine contrition which condemns them in the heart, so as to forsake them altogether; *works of the hands*, the acts of satisfaction in reparation of our past misdoings. And, continuing the Eucharistic gloss, they remind us that the Sacrament is the *work of Christ's hands*, as He is its sole Institutor; it is *verity*, because of the Real Presence, being no mere figure of an absent Person: and *judgment*, because of the condemnation of unworthy communicants.

S. Chrysost.

Agellius.

Bellarmine.

Lev. xviii.

24.

A.

Honorius.

C.

Hugo Card.

Ay.

8 They stand fast for ever and ever: and are done  
in truth and equity.

D  
V

The vindication of God's ways continues. It may not be pleaded by sinners that new laws and conventional statutes can set aside His moral commandments, since these are *for ever and ever*, and thus, if man's enactments profess to legalize aught which He has condemned, as adultery and divorce, they are inherently void, and carry no sanction with them. His laws have *truth* on their side, because God will most certainly fulfil what He hath spoken concerning them; they have *equity*, because they are no mere positive and variable rules, but based on the profoundest morality. And because of their efficacy and power, it is well said, that they are *done*, not *spoken*, in truth and equity. The Carmelite, continuing

S. Basil.  
Theodoret.

C.

Ay.



his reference to the Blessed Sacrament, declares it to stand fast for ever and ever, by reason of the indelible character of the priesthood, and the impossibility of any other oblation supplementing the Eucharist till the end of time, while he takes *truth*, as before, to denote the Real Presence; since in the Holy Eucharist an evil priest and an evil communicant can neither of them prevent the power of the Sacrament from being there, whereas in Baptism an insincere catechumen derives nothing whatever from the rite. And *equity* he goes on to explain as that property of the Holy Eucharist by which it precisely adapts itself to each communicant, being profitable to the devout, and more than perilous to the impenitent.

S. Thomas  
Aquinas.  
The Se-  
quence,  
*Lauda Sion.*

Bad and good the feast are sharing :  
O what diverse dooms preparing,  
Endless death, or endless life!  
Life to these, to those damnation :  
See how like participation  
Is with unlike issues rife.

9 He sent redemption unto his people : he hath  
commanded his covenant for ever ; holy and reverend  
is his Name.

L.

The deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the giving of the Law, the proclamation of the Divine titles to Moses, form the first meaning here. But the Psalmist is looking forward to much more glorious events than these: even to those which God Himself foretold by the mouth of the Prophet: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." And that was fulfilled when "the LORD God of Israel visited and redeemed His people," and "CHRIST, being come an High Priest of good things to come, obtained eternal redemption for us;" and *commanded His new covenant*, appointing it by the hands of His Apostles, after it had been "established upon better promises" than the former one, which, decayed and waxed old, was then ready to vanish away, whereas this one is to abide for ever-

S. Luke i.  
68.  
Heb. ix. 11.  
A.  
C.  
Heb. viii. 6,  
13.

Jer. xxxi. 31.



more, in the power of that Name which is *holy* and beloved by the Saints, but *terrible* (LXX. and Vulg., rightly,) to the wicked, remembering His office and title as Judge of the whole world. In like manner, as in the previous verse, we are reminded of the perpetual duration of the Holy Eucharist, and its twofold effect on those who eat thereof.

Ay.  
C.

10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom : a good understanding have all they that do so thereafter; the praise of it endureth for ever.

As there are two ways of fearing God : a servile dread and a filial reverence, it is needful to inquire which is here intended. And on this S. Thomas says : *The beginning of wisdom* is a term which can be used in two ways ; one, that it is the beginning, as regards the essence of wisdom ; the other, as regards the effect of it. Just so, in any art, its essential beginning consists of the principles whence it is derived ; but its effective beginning is that whence the exercise of the art begins. So we may call a foundation the beginning of architecture, because the architect begins to rear his work thereon. But seeing that wisdom is the knowledge of divine things, we look at it in one way and metaphysicians in another. For as the end of our life is the fruition of God, and is guided in accordance with a certain share of divine nature, bestowed on us by grace ; we do not consider wisdom merely as having to do with the knowledge of God, as the metaphysicians regard it, but also in so far as it is the guide of human life, which has to be regulated not only by human reasons but by divine ones. As then the beginning of wisdom according to its essence is the first principles of wisdom, which are the articles of faith, in this respect we call faith the beginning of wisdom. But so far as the effect of wisdom is concerned, its beginning is that whence wisdom begins to work, and in this way fear is the beginning of wisdom. But servile fear is this beginning in one fashion, and filial fear in quite another. Servile fear is a kind of outward beginning, urging towards wisdom, in so far as any one departs from sin through fear of punishment, and is in this wise got ready for the operation of wisdom, as it is written in Ecclesiasticus : "The fear of the LORD driveth away sins." But pure or filial fear is the beginning of wisdom, as the first effect of wisdom itself. For as it is part of wisdom that human life should be regulated according to divine reasons, it ought to have its beginning from this, that man reverence God, and submit himself to Him. But even this filial dread is no more than the *beginning* of wisdom. Perfect wisdom is love, which casteth out fear. And because of all the good things which flow from the fear of God, which the Wise Man enumerates for us, including honour, glory, gladness, a crown of rejoicing, long life, peace, and perfect health, with much

S. Thomas  
Aquinas.  
Summa.  
xxii. 19, 7.

Eccclus. i. 21.

Honorius.  
1 S. John iv.  
19.  
Eccclus. i.  
11—21.



besides, *a good understanding have all they that do thereafter.* Not, be it observed, they who *know* and are learned in the theory, but they that *do*, for it is written: "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin," and, moreover, "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." *The praise of it endureth for ever.* That is, in this way of reading the words, the praise of such understanding as prompts a man to keep God's commandments, and therefore the praise of that man himself, shall endure for ever, because he shall dwell in the house of the LORD always, and join in the millenary song of heavenly praise; and will, moreover, himself be praised and commended by his LORD as a good and faithful servant, and will hear the words of eulogy echoed by all the Saints and Angels. But it seems better to take the clause, with A.V., *His praise endureth for ever*; that is, the praise of the LORD, our Redemption, Whose Name is blessed to ages of ages. His praise can have no end, because His bounties are inexhaustible. We praise Him here on earth, because He rescues sinners; we shall praise Him in the world to come, because He crowns His Saints; and thus this Psalm, which begins with Alleluia, fitly ends with the declaration that this song of laud shall resound for evermore.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, Who hath sent Redemption unto His people; glory be to the SON, Who hath given us the meat of His new Covenant as a memorial of His wondrous works; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Spirit of understanding and of the fear of the LORD.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

Ludolph. O GOD, glorious confession of all Saints, grant us the fear of Thy Name, which Thou hast declared to be the beginning of wisdom, that joined to the councils of Thy servants, we may be filled with the banquet of Thy mercy. (1.)

(Mozarabic. Great are Thy works, O LORD, sought out for all Thy wills. Grant us, Thy servants, while we admire the greatness of Thy works, to praise with due confession the glory of the Creator, and search out with reverent wisdom Thy faithful commandments, and achieve with obedient fear the perfect comeliness of understanding. (11.)

D. C. O merciful and gracious LORD, Who with Thy wonted goodness hast long spared us sinners; fill us at length with a good understanding, and pour into our minds fear, the beginning of Thy wisdom, and make us to please Thee by living henceforth a sober and godly life. (1.)



## PSALM CXII.

**TITLE.** LXX: Alleluia. Vulgate: Alleluia. Of the return of Haggai and Zechariah.

**ARGUMENT.**

**ARG. THOMAS.** That CHRIST is the distributor of heavenly prizes to the poor, and their rewarder. Also the Voice of the Church concerning CHRIST with praise, and of the fruit of the fear of the LORD. The Voice of them that fear GOD.

**VEN. BEDÆ.** Haggai and Zechariah were Prophets, who, after the carrying away to Babylon, returned to Jerusalem in the time of King Darius, long after those words (Ps. cxi.) were sung; and when they saw the Temple restored, poured forth praises to GOD with great joy. In likeness whereof this Psalm also is constructed with all the letters of the alphabet; and a Christian ought to sing it with perfect readiness after the absolution of his sins.

The Prophet speaks throughout the Psalm. In the first exhortation he shows what a blessed man will do, and what good things he shall attain: *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.* Secondly; he declares the LORD's coming, by Whom men will attain to everlasting blessedness, from having been sinners and ungodly: *There ariseth up light in the darkness.* Thirdly; he witnesseth that the reverse will come upon the wicked: *The ungodly shall see it.* The first division contains six letters; the second, thirteen; the third, three. Two verselets herein fill up the measure of the verse which forms the construction of Psalm cxviii. (cxix.) so that what one letter does there, here two different ones, following each other in order, do.<sup>1</sup>

**SYRIAC PSALTER.** Anonymous. Wherein David giveth instruction to Solomon his son, Keep the commandments of the LORD, and serve Him. Also the calling of the Gentiles and the righteousness of CHRIST.

**EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA.** The teaching of CHRIST.

**S. ATHANABIUS.** A Psalm proclaiming blessedness; Also, describing a life endued with holy virtue.

**VARIOUS USES.**

Gregorian.	} Sunday: Vespers.
Monastic.	
Ambrosian.	
Parisian.	
Lyons.	
Quignon.	Wednesday: Vespers.

<sup>1</sup> This obscurely worded sentence merely denotes that each verse of this Psalm is marked by two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, one for each hemistich; whereas in Psalm 119 one letter

stands at the head of each section, and each verse of every section; and the next letter does not form part of the acrostic till another section begins.



## ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* In His commandments \* he hath great delight. [Christmas Day : There ariseth up \* light in the darkness unto the godly ; merciful, loving, and righteous is the LORD.]

*Ambrosian.* Merciful, \* loving, and righteous is the LORD.

*Parisian.* } He that feareth the LORD \* hath great delight in  
*Lyons.* } His commandments.

*Mozarabic.* Merciful, and loving, and righteous is the LORD : a good man is merciful.

℟ 1 [Alleluia.] Blessed is the man that feareth the  
 ℣ LORD : he hath great delight in his commandments.

Honorius. We have in this opening the continuance and further exposition of that beginning of wisdom of which the closing verse of Psalm cxi. told us. There is enough in that fear, which S. Chrysostom calls the golden gate of happiness, to make a man blessed, not indeed with the bliss that belongs to our Country, but with such a measure of gladness as befits pilgrims in the way. And there are two distinct stages of progress set before us, that fear of the LORD which causes men to reverence and observe His negative precepts, by abstaining from sins which He has forbidden ; and then that higher obedience which consists in carrying out with loving zeal His positive injunctions, that learning to do well which follows ceasing to do evil. For *He hath great delight* the LXX. and Vulgate wording is *He shall will excessively* ; that is, as one tells us, his will is greater than his power ; and instead of resting satisfied with the impossibility, his eagerness and longing does but the more increase, and his hunger and thirst after righteousness become intensified.

Ric. Vict. We may lay stress on the phrase *The Man*, and so explain it of CHRIST, the type and example of all His Saints, or we may, besides the obvious reference to each righteous person, see the whole Christian Church here denoted as a single individual, to express the notion of absolute unity. Eusebius, pointing out that the expression *fear God* is often used in Scripture to signify the imperfect worship paid to Him by Gentiles unversed in the Law (as in the case of the Assyrian colonists sent by Shalmaneser into Palestine,) argues thence that the Christian Church, as made up chiefly of Gentiles, is here intended, and its zeal in God's commandments contrasted with Hebrew apathy.

Honorius.  
 Eusebius.  
 2 Kings xvii. 32.

℣ 2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth : the generation of the faithful shall be blessed.

There is more promised here than that fruitfulness to which the Jew looked as among the chief of blessings ;



namely, spiritual increase of converts and disciples for the teachers of righteousness; increase in good works, as a vigorous and numerous progeny, on the part of these disciples themselves, if they lay to heart the lessons of their teachers. Whoso delights in willingly obeying God's commandments, is worthy to become the father of Saints, as S. Paul was of Timothy, Luke, Titus, and many more, and as S. Peter spiritually begat S. Mark the Evangelist and S. Cornelius. And each such Saint gives birth to many works of righteousness for God, mighty even here upon earth in the strife against evil, blessed in their results; but mightier in the land of the living, more blessed when those words are spoken, "Come, ye blessed of My FATHER, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." To both the one and the other class the promise holds good that "they shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them."

Pseudo-Hieron.  
S. Hieron.  
in Esai.

C.  
Ric. Hamp.

S. Matt.  
xxv. 34.  
Isa. lxxv. 23.

3 Riches and plenteousness shall be in his house : 7  
and his righteousness endureth for ever. 7

In the lower sense, we may read these words literally of abundant wealth bestowed on the righteous by God, and used, not for pride and luxury, but for continual works of mercy, whence it is said of the person so enriched, that *his righteousness endureth for ever*. But the higher meaning bids us see here those true spiritual riches which are stored up for the poor in spirit, often most needy in the prosperity of the world; and we may come at the truest sense by comparing the words wherein the great Apostle describes his own condition, "As poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." For who can be richer than he who is heir of God, and joint heir with CHRIST? If we take the Man to be CHRIST, then the Church is that *house* of His wherein spiritual riches are stored; if we take the phrase of any faithful servant of the Master, then his heart is the dwelling wherein, as in an earthen vessel, he stores this treasure, *his* righteousness, because it is God's free gift to him, and "godliness with contentment is great gain."

Agellius.

S. Chrysost.

Didymus.  
2 Cor. vi. 10.

Hugo Card.

A.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.

1 Tim. vi. 6.

4 Unto the godly there ariseth up light in the darkness : he is merciful, loving, and righteous. 7

The use of this verse as the Antiphon to the Psalm in the second Vespers of Christmas supplies us at once with the highest sense of the words, as denoting the revelation of CHRIST to the world, a light shining in the dark places of the earth, on them who aforetime sat in the shadow of death, and that light Himself, merciful, loving, and righteous. He comes still, in continual Advents, arising in the dark hearts

Brev. Rom.

C.  
Hugo Card.



D. C.  
Eph. v. 8.  
Bellarmine.

of men as the Day-star, the Sun of Righteousness, so that they who were sometime darkness are now light in the LORD. And in a sense only lower than this, it is true that the godly are not left without guidance here amidst the perplexities and dangers of the world, but when all is most gloomy and doubtful, then comes a ray of light from God, to show them the path wherein they must walk to be in safety; a light to cheer and encourage them in trouble. And although it is best to take the three epithets which here follow as applying to God only, Himself the Light for the godly, inasmuch as all three words are in the singular, whereas *godly* *יְשָׁרִים*, is plural; yet it is possible that there may be a sudden transition here back to the "man" of the previous verses, or else we may have three classes of the godly described, for each of whom the light springs up. But in that case it would be better to understand these qualities as the result of the light, whereby that which was darkness became shining with holiness; not because it had any inherent brightness of its own, but by reason of reflecting the rays of that divine splendour poured upon it by the revelation of JESUS.

R. Kimchl.

5 A good man is merciful, and lendeth : and will guide his words with discretion.

Allan, Var.  
Hist. 13.

2 Cor. ix. 7.

Ecclus.  
xxxv. 9.

A.

C.  
Prov. xix.  
17.

Honorius.

Bellarmino.

It was a saying of Ptolemy Lagi, King of Egypt, that it is better to enrich than to be rich (*ἐμμενόν εἶναι πλουτίζειν ἢ πλουτεῖν*) a maxim on which he acted by a liberal distribution of his wealth; showing himself in this wise a type of the cheerful giver whom God loves, who follows the counsel of the Wise Man, "In all thy gifts show a cheerful countenance, and dedicate thy tithes with gladness." But S. Augustine, noting that almsgiving is mentioned in a later verse, prefers to understand this passage of the free forgiveness of injuries, which as we learn from the Our FATHER, is a kind of spiritual alms. We may, however, keep to the literal sense, yet without dwelling too forcibly on the word *lendeth*, as though implying expectation of repayment, for it is written, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will He pay him again." And it may be well understood of words of wisdom spoken to the unlearned by such as have no gold or silver to bestow, but who can lead their hearers to the true riches of the Gospel.

*And will guide his words with discretion.* There are several ways of understanding this sentence, the connection of which with the previous part of the verse is not at first sight very clear. It may mean, as the Prayer Book version implies, prudence in language, carefulness to avoid offence; so that the good man is not only ready with his purse, but shows such courtesy in his discourse with the poor as to add a fresh grace to his charity. Next, it may stand as in the



A.V., *He shall guide his affairs with discretion*, where the LXX. word *οικονομησει*, *he shall regulate household matters*, gives a sufficient sense. The notion then will be that of his judicious management of his wealth, regarding himself merely as God's steward, and assigning to each person with whom he has to do a fair proportion of that riches, so as not to waste it by thoughtless lavishness on the one hand, nor to display narrow parsimony on the other.

But the LXX. and Vulgate translate, with greater exactness, *He shall regulate his words in judgment*. And this is taken by most of the commentators to mean, He shall so conduct his life with charity and almsgiving here, that when he stands for judgment before CHRIST's tribunal, he will have a clear defence and statement to make against the adversary, and when asked to account for the wealth of which he has been steward, will reply, "LORD, Thou deliveredst unto me five talents : behold, I have gained beside them five talents more." Or we may take the words to denote a like success when appearing at any earthly bar, that he shall in all cases maintain his cause and prevail. Yet again, some would fain interpret them not as a promised blessing but as another proof of kindliness. He will not only give his money to the poor, but will plead his cause as an advocate. Or if we return to that notion of lending already referred to, the words may denote the discretion of Christian preachers, not casting their pearls before swine, nor giving that which is holy to the dogs, but wisely apportioning their instructions according to the capacity of their hearers. Yet a further idea is put forward in this connection, that the Saints who have freely taught the Faith to CHRIST's poor, shall maintain their cause in judgment ; that is, will be able, like Athanasius, to carry victory from councils where all the craft and power of heresy is arrayed against the Gospel. And finally, we may take the whole verse of our LORD Himself, Who in His goodness had pity on us, and lent us all the grace and strength we need for salvation, of which He will demand repayment with interest when He, Who spake ever with divine wisdom, Who overcame when He was judged, shall guide His own words in the Judgment, words of reward to His faithful stewards, words of condemnation to such as have wasted His goods.

Agellius.

S. Chrysost.  
A.

Honorius.

Isa. i. 17.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.

Cocceius.

D. C.

6 For he shall never be moved : and the righteous  
shall be had in everlasting remembrance.

Here is the reason why he shall maintain his cause in judgment, because he is steadfast and firm in his resolutions, and takes careful foresight, leaving nothing to accident, that he may not be unexpectedly moved ; and because hereof, recognised as a wise counsellor and a liberal benefactor, his

Bellarmine.



A. and then, in a yet higher sense, *he shall never be moved*  
 C. from his place at CHRIST's right hand, where he is founded  
 upon the Rock, and his name shall be written for ever in the  
 Book of Life. We may take the words also of the human  
 D. C. nature of the LORD JESUS in this sense, although it seems  
 Cocceus. better to apply them to His Body the Church, unshaken  
 Pachy- through the lapse of ages, always, day by day, making mem-  
 meres. orial of Him, the Righteous One, and commemorating in  
 her services His great Saints, while no such religious ob-  
 servance honours the memory of the chiefs of sects and  
 heresies.

7 He will not be afraid of any evil tidings : for  
 his heart standeth fast, and believeth in the LORD.

Bellarmino. He will have no cause to fear aught that slanderers or  
 ungodly enemies may utter against him in this world, he  
 S. Atha- need not dread in the Judgment Day those far more *evil*  
 nasius. tidings bidding him depart into everlasting fire. Nor will  
 S. Chrysost. he fear those who can kill the body, and who threaten him  
 Honorius. with death, unless he apostatize, and abjure CHRIST. There  
 Hugo Card. is a further interpretation whereby we can connect this verse  
 more closely with the preceding ones: He will not be afraid  
 of any news of the loss of his wealth, because he does not  
 1 Tim. vi. 17. "trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God," and is  
 confident that He will not suffer him to want. In this wise,  
 as in the others, *his heart standeth fast and believeth in the*  
 S. Chrysost. Lord, and because it is looking steadfastly at Him, it does  
 not suffer its gaze to be diverted by aught of less importance.

8 His heart is established, and will not shrink :  
 until he see his desire upon his enemies.

D. C. And so the Apostle tells us, "It is a good thing that the  
 Heb. xiii. 9. heart be established with grace," sufficient to keep the be-  
 liever undismayed amidst all temporal and spiritual perils,  
 Z. until *he look down upon his enemies* (Heb., Vulg.) from a high  
 and safe place. That is, until in this world he succeed in  
 overcoming the evil spirits by the power of CHRIST, the Rock  
 on whom he is set; until in the Judgment he see the foes  
 Pseudo- who oppressed him here, persecutors, slanderers, unbe-  
 Hieron. lievers, false brethren, cast down while he is exalted. And  
 Ay. observe that *until*, here as elsewhere, does not imply that he  
 will begin to fear after his enemies have been defeated, but  
 rather his everlasting immunity from alarm.

9 He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the  
 poor : and his righteousness remaineth for ever ; his  
 horn shall be exalted with honour.



The Apostle S. Paul, in quoting this verse with reference <sup>2 Cor. ix. 8.</sup> to the contributions for which he was asking the Corinthians, prefixes some words of his own which serve as a comment on the latter part of it: "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." Then follows the quotation from the Psalm, and the connection makes it clear that the intention in this place is to represent the endurance of righteousness and the exaltation of the horn as God's reward for charitable dealing towards the poor. Accordingly, the words are used as the *Y.* and *Ry.* to the Hymn in the office of S. Laurence, famous in ecclesiastical history for his distribution of the treasures of the Church amongst the needy. The word *dispersed* implies the extent and freedom of bounty, like the rays of the sun on the drops of the rain. But it was actually perverted by certain Talmudists to mean turning a small sum of money into coins of the lowest value, and bestowing these upon a large number of persons, so as to spread the parsimonious gift over the widest area. Far better is the counsel of the Angelic Doctor, who lays down two simple rules for almsgiving, that it is to be regulated by one's own means and the need of the person to be helped. And that not recklessly, but with clear recollection that we are acting as stewards, and are bound to be careful with our Master's property. And in this wise a poor man may buy with a cup of cold water what costs a rich one all his wealth. The LORD Himself dispersed abroad the rich gifts of the HOLY GHOST, giving them to the poor fishermen whom He chose to be His Apostles, and He still showers down like blessings, because the horn of His kingdom is exalted with honour, so that He has power to do so, and His righteousness endureth for ever, so that He has the will too. And those Apostles in their turn dispersed abroad and gave to the poor, not silver and gold, for such gifts were not in their power, nor yet the Gospel only, precious as that was, for in giving it they did not take aught from themselves; but that they might go forth to preach the Word, they forsook houses and brethren, and sisters, and father, and mother, and wife, and children, and lands, and life itself, for the sake of CHRIST'S Name; and thus most truly flung all these to the winds, and gave them to the poor, wherefore their *righteousness remaineth for ever* in heaven, and their *horn shall be exalted in honour*, because they are to sit on thrones as assessors of the King Himself in judgment.

Brev. Rom.

Le Blanc.  
Cd.

Agellius.

S. Thomas  
Aquinas,  
ii. 2, 31, 10.  
S. Greg. M.  
de Cur. Past.  
Honorius.

Hugo Card.

Cocceius.  
S. Matt.  
xix. 29.

10 The ungodly shall see it, and it shall grieve <sup>7</sup>  
him : he shall gnash with his teeth, and consume <sup>ש</sup>  
away ; the desire of the ungodly shall perish. <sup>ת</sup>

The Greek Fathers for the most part take the *ungodly* here



S. Athanasius.  
S. Chrysost.  
Theodoret.

D. C.

to be Satan, in his impotent rage at seeing the triumph of the Saints, here when they are victorious over his emissaries, and still more as they ascend in glory after the Judgment, and he sinks to his appointed place. Others extend the notion to Antichrist, or to any of the finally impenitent, and they urge, for the most part, that envy at the happier fortune of the elect will be one cause of this gnashing of teeth and wasting away; in that the total destruction of their own hope leaves them nothing to which to look forward. But we may also take the verse in the milder sense of the agonies of repentance, not too late, when tears and mortification, and the total disappearance of all former evil lusts, slain by the sword of the Spirit, shall bring the sinner to the foot of the Cross, to the grave of CHRIST, to be raised up thence again in newness of life.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, merciful, loving, and righteous; glory be to the SON, Who hath dispersed His bounties abroad, and given them to the poor; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the Light which ariseth in the darkness.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

Ludolph.

O God, everlasting light of the upright in heart, grant that we may love Thee; and make us glad with Thy glory, and so disperse abroad in this world, that we may hear no evil tidings in that which is to come. (1.)

Mozarabic.

O merciful and righteous LORD, make us ever to be merciful, and with all readiness to minister to one another's needs, nor dismay us with evil tidings when Thou shalt judge us, but set us in glory on Thy right hand. (11.)

Mozarabic.

O merciful LORD, Thou art the beginning of fear and wisdom, instruct us therefore with the former, and stablish us in the latter; cause us to begin with fear, and make us perfect in the fulness of wisdom. (11.)

D. C.

Make us mighty upon earth, O LORD, in works pleasing unto Thee, and let our soul live in Thy righteousness by Thine aid; grant us, we beseech Thee, that we may ever run the way of Thy commandments, by Whose grace we may obtain all that we ask. (1.)



## PSALM CXIII.

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

## ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST turneth the Church, long barren, into the fruitfulness of holiness. The Voice of the Church with praise. The Voice of the Church which she utters to her faithful children, who are born again in the holy font, whatever be their flesh or age. The Voice of the Church to GOD. The Voice of the Church concerning her faithful ones.

VEN. BEDE. The following Psalm explains the words of the title: for as it is *Alleluia, Praise ye the Lord*, so the Psalm itself begins.

The Prophet David in the first part exhorts the devout always to offer praise to GOD, and to proclaim Him in all the world: *Praise the Lord, ye servants*. Secondly, he does himself what he exhorts others: *Who is like unto the Lord our God?*

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. It is spoken as an earnest warning touching the ministry of the LORD to be performed by the priests at the morning season. It urges us, a new people, born again of water and the SPIRIT, that we should be ready to minister, with hearts sprinkled and washed by the HOLY GHOST, and with pure minds.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA. The calling of the new people.

S. ATHANASIUS. A psalm uttering praise.

## VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* Sunday and Festivals: Vespers. [Feasts B.V.M., Common of Apostles: II. Vespers.]

<i>Ambrosian.</i>	} Sunday: Vespers.
<i>Parisian.</i>	
<i>Lyons.</i>	
<i>Quignon.</i>	

Tuesday: Vespers.

## ANTIPHONS.

The Sunday Antiphon in the chief Uses is, Let the Name \* of the LORD be blessed for evermore.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* [Common B.V.M.: His left hand is under my head, \* and His right hand shall embrace me. Common of Apostles: That He may set him with the princes, \* even with the princes of the people.]

*Mozarabic.* First verse.

With this Psalm begins the Hallel, or "Great Alleluia of the Jews," (although this latter name is sometimes restricted to Ps. cxxxvi.) namely, the group of Psalms cxiii. to cxviii. inclusive, which was sung at the Passover, Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of Dedication, and on all the New Moons. At the



Passover it was divided into two parts, the first consisting of Pss. cxiii., cxiv., sung before the second Cup at the Paschal Supper was passed round, and thus consequently before the meal itself, which began immediately after that ceremony: the second consisting of Pss. cxv.—cxviii., sung after the filling of the fourth Cup, and supposed to be “the hymn” which CHRIST and the Apostles are stated to have sung after the Last Supper, before they went out to Gethsemane, (S. Matt. xxvi. 30; S. Mark xiv. 26.) It is interesting in another aspect, from forming the intermediate link in Hebrew poetry between the Song of Hannah and the Magnificat, with each of which it has something in common.

1 [Alleluia.] Praise the LORD, ye servants : O praise the Name of the LORD.

Agellius.

Rit. Rom.

A.

1 Cor. xiv.  
20.

S. Matt.  
xviii. 3.  
L.

The threefold utterance of the Divine Name, the triple call to praise it, veils here the mystery of the Holy Trinity. A certain ambiguity in the LXX. and Vulgate, which have *boys* or *children* (*paides, pueri*) for *servants*, has led not only to the use of the Psalm in the Latin office for infant baptism and burial, but also to much comment on the word in question. S. Augustine, followed by several others, bids us note that it is purity, innocence, and docility, not a special time of life, which we have to look to as here denoted; citing various Scriptures in illustration, as thus: “Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.” But as we have to enter in at the strait gate, it behoves us to be like children, who can readily pass through a narrow entrance; and therefore the LORD saith, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” It is out of the mouths of such babes and sucklings as these, that He hath perfected praise, as He accepted that of the children in the Temple, when the voices of men were silent.

2 Blessed be the Name of the LORD : from this time forth for evermore.

A.

Isa. xlii. 4.

Hence we learn that God's praises are not to cease with our advancing years, for He hath said, “Even to your old age I am He,” and therefore His claim to our worship is unceasing. *From this time forth* does not mean that He begins to be praised only now, but that each of us makes a beginning of joining in the hymn of creation; while, if only we persevere in His service, our song shall go on *for evermore* in the ceaseless melody of heaven.

3 The LORD's Name is praised : from the rising up of the sun unto the going down of the same.

C.

Here is a further instruction. God's praise is not merely



to be ceaseless, but universal ; not restricted by the limits of Judea, but extending to the utmost bounds of the earth. And so He speaks by the mouth of the Prophet : " From the rising up of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles ; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My Name, and a pure offering ; for My Name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of Hosts." In which prophecy note that there is exactly the same threefold proclamation of the Holy Name as in the Psalm, pointing to the same sacred mystery. And we too, in life and in death, in the morning and the evening of our mortal career, praise the LORD JESUS for His arising as the Sun of Righteousness in His Nativity, His setting in the ruddy glow of His Passion. Z.  
Hugo Card.

4 The LORD is high above all heathen : and his glory above the heavens.

This points without doubt, say the Greek Fathers, to the preaching of the kingdom of CHRIST, for the obvious sense here of the LORD being *high above all heathen* is, not merely that He is of course so in His essence, which would be a bare truism, but that He is the object of love and adoration among the Gentiles, which did not begin to hold good till the Gospel brought the nations to the knowledge of GOD. Up to that time, His worship was practically confined to Palestine, and to those scattered synagogues of Jews who looked to Jerusalem as their centre of worship, but effected very little in bringing proselytes to kneel before the LORD. And in adding *His glory is above the heavens*, we may see a reference to the Angel carols at the Nativity, and again to the renewed song of triumph at the Ascension, as well as to His mission of the Paraclete thereupon to those lower heavens, the Apostles, who brought the Gentiles to confess His Name. Eusebius.  
S. Chrysost.  
  
Z.  
A.

5 Who is like unto the LORD our God, that hath his dwelling so high : and yet humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth ?

The Psalmist magnifies the unapproachable majesty and exaltation of GOD, by depicting Him as so highly enthroned that He looks down, not only upon the earth, but over heaven and all therein, as something beneath His feet. And this Solomon expressed, saying, " Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee." The LXX. Vulgate turn the sentence a little differently, and read, *Who beholdeth the lowly things in heaven and in earth.* Hereupon several of the Latins have raised a needless difficulty, urging that *lowly* cannot be predicated of things in heaven, and desiring to read the passage as though it meant *sitting in* Titelman.  
  
1 Kings viii.  
27.  
  
L.



S. Bernard. *heaven, and beholding the lowly things on earth.* This will not stand with the LXX. reading, which has *both in heaven and in earth*, and does not weaken the force of the sentence. One however points out that the loyal angels may well be styled *humble* in contrast to the rebels who fell by pride.

A. But the best comment on the verse is to be found in the  
Isa. lvii. 15. LORD's own words spoken by Isaiah: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, Whose Name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." And the Saint of God, having his conversation in heaven, while here on earth in the body, dwells with God in both places, and is alike lowly and contrite, alike looked on by Him with favour in his spiritual and temporal capacity. Much more are the words true of Him Who as God ceased not to be in heaven, while as Man He was sorrowful and rejected on earth; and therefore it was most fitting that His Blessed Mother should adapt this Psalm to herself, saying, "He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden;" as He hath done ever since to His humble Saints, whether engaged in the heaven of contemplation, or the earth of active life.

L.

Honorius.

6 He taketh up the simple out of the dust: and lifteth the poor out of the mire;

7 That he may set him with the princes: even with the princes of his people.

1 Sam. ii. 8. These words are taken, with but little variation, from the  
S. Luke i. Song of Hannah, and are recalled, though not exactly cited,  
52. in the Magnificat. There are several mystical ideas brought out by the expositors, who understand the *simple* or the *needy* of the first clause, (*inopem*, A. V. *poor*) as CHRIST Himself, taken up first into mortal existence from the pure earth of His Virgin Mother, taken up again in the Ascension from earth to heaven; while we may read the words also, together with those that follow, as denoting His deliverance of mankind from the dust of earthliness and the *mire*, or rather, with LXX., Vulgate, and A. V., the *dunghill*, of pollution. Some take the *dust*, or *earth*, as LXX. and Vulgate read, to be the Jews, and the Gentiles as the *dunghill*, because of their coarser vices, and tell us that CHRIST chooses His elect from both these indiscriminately, to set them with His Angels and Saints in heaven. Or we may apply both epithets to the Gentiles alone, the first one denoting the meanness and poverty of their notions about God; the second, the foulness of their idolatrous rites, and then we are taught that God puts them on a level with the Jews, truly the *princes of His people*, for Israel denotes a "Prince with God." In the reference to CHRIST, more than one Saint reminds us

Hugo Card.

A.

S. Chrysost.

Ay.

Ric. Hamp.

Elias Cre-

tensis.

Honorius.

S. Chrysost.



that by His birth in the manger-stable, He was literally brought down in His humiliation to the dunghill, whence He was exalted again to riches and honour, whereof holy Job was a type. And as regards His members, they tell us that voluntary self-abasement and penitence, typified by the dunghill, ("behold, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.") is the first step towards being lifted up by the LORD, and set with His princes; not taking that honour to ourselves, till He call us, lest He should say: "They have set up kings, but not by Me: they have made princes, and I knew it not." 4.

S. Bernard.  
Serm. 6, in  
Vig. Nat.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.  
Job xlii. 6.  
Heb. v. 6.  
Hugo Card.  
Hosea viii.  
4.

8 He maketh the barren woman to keep house :  
and to be a joyful mother of children.

*To keep house.* That is, not merely to have a settled position and dwelling, as possessing a family, but also in the colloquial sense in which we use this phrase. For a barren wife was often divorced, or made inferior in the household to another who had borne children, albeit brought in at a later date, and it is not improbable that a claim to hold the position of domestic authority as the mother of Abraham's first-born is implied in the words used of Hagar, that "her mistress was despised in her eyes." There is a three-fold interpretation of this verse in a mystical sense. The first, and that most followed, takes it of the Gentile Church, raised to a position of superiority over the Jewish, according to the words of Isaiah, adopted later and republished by S. Paul: "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes: for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is His Name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called. For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken, and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God." Next, they take the verse of a soul heretofore unfruitful in good works, but wedded to CHRIST by repentance and love, and bringing forth abundant progeny to Him; and finally, it is understood of the great company of the Virgin Saints of the Church in the Religious Life, having many more spiritual descendants, many more children of Paula, and Scholastica, and Clara, and Teresa, than can be numbered by the most

Gen. xvi. 4.  
Cf. Deut.  
xxi. 15.  
A.  
Isa. lii. 1.  
Gal. iv. 27.

Hugo Card.



fruitful progenetrix of secular races, even as the Blessed Mary herself, though ever-Virgin, is, by her Son, the Mother of all Christians. So runs the hymn in honour of S. Clare, dwelling on her *house* and her *children* alike :

Mone.  
Hymn.  
Latin.  
iii. 869.

Generat virgo filias,  
Mentis maternæ concias,  
Christi sponsas et socias,  
Corruptionis nescias.

\* \* \* \*

Construuntur oenobis  
Vasta per orbis spatia,  
Crescit sororum copia,  
Claret matris notitia.

A virgin mother daughters bears,  
Who know her true maternal cares,  
CHRIST's brides, and partners of His reign,  
Who know not foul pollution's stain.

\* \* \* \*

Now far and wide through many a land  
The rising convent buildings stand,  
And clearly shines the mother's fame,  
As throngs of sisters bear her name.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is high above all heathen ;  
glory be to the SON, Who humbled Himself to behold us on  
earth, and lifted us up from the dunghill ; glory be to the  
HOLY GHOST, Who maketh the barren woman to keep house.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world  
without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

Ludolph. Almighty God, we who praise Thy holy Name, beseech  
Thee that as Thou hast placed us in the bosom of our Mother,  
the Church, so Thou wouldst unite us in steadfastness of  
love. (1.)

Mozarabic. O LORD, Who dwellest on high, and beholdest the things  
in heaven and earth ; graciously bow Thyself down to us,  
and as Thou hast promised men the bliss of the Angels, vouch-  
safe to mould us to angelic obedience. (11.)

Mozarabic. O LORD most High, Who beholdest the lowly, grant us  
lowliness that we may please Thee, nor suffer pride to re-  
main within us, which Thou throwest afar off and destroyest  
when near ; that, of Thy mercy, the haughtiness which cast-  
eth down may depart from our mind, and contrition which  
bringeth glory may abide in our heart. (11.)

Mozarabic. O God, Whose Name is blessed from the rising up of the  
sun unto the going down of the same ; fill our heart with  
knowledge, and commit the service of Thy praise to our



mouth, that as Thou art blessed with due homage throughout the ages, so Thou mayest be praised from sunrise to sunset with the harmonious voice of all men. (11.)

O LORD, Who art high above all nations, and dwellest gloriously in the heavens, look down mercifully from Thy lofty place on our humility, and as Thy Church, which was once afflicted with barrenness, now believing in Thee is full of the merits of holiness and fruitful in sons; so our soul, barren by reason of unfruitfulness in works, may of Thy bounty both receive the seed of the Word, and abound with plenteous fruits, and zealously strive to love Thy mighty Name with unanimity of heart from the sun-rising to the sun-setting, and to praise it with agreement in faith. (11.)

O our God, Whose dwelling is on high, and Who liftest the poor up from the dunghill, mercifully look upon us Thy humble servants on earth, and raise us to the heights of holiness, that we may advance therein daily, and persevere without fainting. (1.)

Mozarabic.

D. C.

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## PSALM CXIV.

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

### ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. The Voice of the Apostles with the Jews, rebuking idols. The Voice of the Apostles to the Jews, rebuking idols, and narrating the wonders wrought for the Jews. The Voice of them that praise God. It forbiddeth idols.

VEN. BEDE. As the praise of GOD is gathered from His various doings, so also *Alleluia* is applied to different suitable narratives and matters. The design of this Psalm is to declare that fulfilling of the Law (which is CHRIST the LORD) vouchsafed to the world by mighty miracles from the beginning of the Hebrew people; by which similitudes it proves that to-day also every Christian is set free. Throughout the Psalm the Prophet speaks. In the first part he commemorates the miracles which the LORD wrought for the Hebrews and the Christian people: *When Israel came out*. Secondly; he saith, with a question, why the sea fled, why Jordan stayed his course, adding the joyous answer that the earth was moved at the face of the LORD: *What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest?* Thirdly; he shows that the idols of the Gentiles are useless to their worshippers, and explains thereupon how quickening and healthful is the religion of the LORD to its disciples: *Their idols are silver, &c.*

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. From the old Scriptures, concerning Moses, who uttered praise by the sea. For us, the calling of the Gospel, by which we, aforesaid barbarians, were made a new people, spiritual unto GOD Incarnate, JESUS CHRIST, Who redeemed



us by His Blood from the curse of Scripture, and cleansed us from sin by His SPIRIT.

EUSEBIUS OF CESAREA. An instruction of the new people.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm of narration. Also; Hortatory, and, as it were, commanding.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* Sunday: Vespers.

*Ambrosian.*

*Parisian.*

*Lyons.*

*Quignon.*

} Sunday: Vespers.

#### ANTIPHONE.

We who live \* bless the LORD.

*Mozarabic.* Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give the praise.

1 When Israel came out of Egypt : and the house of Jacob from among the strange people ;

2 Judah was his sanctuary : and Israel his dominion.

Bellarmino. The LXX. begins the Psalm with a more familiar phrase : *In the Exodus of Israel.* And the Psalmist tells us how this very act was the true beginning of the national life of the Hebrews, their consecration as a special people to the service of God. They went down merely as the *house of Jacob*, members of a single family, if not actually a single household ; and while in Egypt itself, they were on the one hand mixed up with the native population, and on the other, were serfs and bondslaves, with no independent polity. That they continued, however, to be radically distinct from the Egyptians appears from the word *strange*, translated by the A. V. *of strange language*, (Aquila, *ἑτερογλώσσου*), but by Chaldee, LXX. and Vulgate *barbarous*. It is more precisely *שִׁטְט*, "stammering," that is, unintelligible ; a sense in which S. Paul employs the corresponding Greek expression, saying, "If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me."<sup>1</sup>

Agellius. 1 Cor. xiv. 11.

Delitzsch. *Judah was His sanctuary.* Judah here does not stand for the royal tribe, still less for the Patriarch, but for the whole land of Judea, a meaning fixed in Hebrew by the feminine form of the verb. But the earlier commentators do take it of the tribe, pointing out that even before the reign of David it had acquired a certain priority ; inasmuch as it led the van

<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the Russians call the Germans *Njemetz*, which means "dumb."



of march in the wilderness, and was divinely selected to begin Numb. x. 14.  
 the attack on the Canaanites after the death of Joshua. There Judg. i. 2.  
 is a Rabbinical legend that this leadership was conferred as a  
 reward upon Judah, because when all the Israelites hung Lyranus.  
 back in alarm at the brink of the Red Sea, Amminadab, Ay.  
 prince of that tribe, caught up the standard of his house and  
 passed first between the waters. But there are two sufficient  
 reasons, independently of the grammatical one, for taking  
 Judah to mean the whole country. First; the parallelism  
 between the two strophes of the verse is thus exact, and  
*Israel* precisely balances Judah. Next; no place specially  
 sacred in Jewish history lay within the limits of the tribe of  
 Judah. Shiloh, in Ephraim, was the earliest shrine of the Josh. xviii.  
 Ark after the conquest, and Jerusalem lay within the actual 1.  
 boundaries of Benjamin. And, finally, the epithet *sanctuary*  
 is twice applied to the whole of Palestine in other parts of  
 Scripture; once in the Song of Moses: "Thou shalt bring Exod. xv.  
 them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheri- 17.  
 tance, in the place, O LORD, which Thou hast made for Thee  
 to dwell in, in the Sanctuary. O LORD, which Thy hands  
 have established;" and once in the Psalter: "And brought Ps. lxxviii.  
 them within the borders of His Sanctuary." And *Israel His* 55.  
*dominion*. This points to the establishment of the Theocracy, Targum.  
 in that Israel was the only nation whose King was the LORD Titelman.  
 Himself, and wherein He habitually displayed His provi-  
 dence by miraculous acts of power.

The Paschal character of this Psalm, and its triumphant  
 accents, have led to its use primarily as an Easter Psalm  
 in the Christian Church, and then its employment on every  
 Sunday, the festival whereon a weekly commemoration is  
 made of the Resurrection of CHRIST our Passover. This use  
 is emphasized by the custom of the modern Roman Breviary,  
 which deviates so far from its normal custom of employing Brev. Rom.  
 the same Psalms for Sundays and festivals, as to substitute  
 Ps. cxvii. for this one on feast-days which have not a specific  
 Sunday rite of their own. The connection between Israel's  
 passage of the Red Sea, led by Moses with his rod, and the  
 march of the Christian people out of the bondage of sin  
 through the ruddy depths of the Passion, following the Cross  
 of CHRIST, is forcibly brought out by one word, whose force  
 is lost in the A.V. In S. Luke's narrative of the Transfigu- S. Luke ix.  
 ration, it is said, "And behold, there talked with Him two 31.  
 men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory,  
 and spake of His decease which He should accomplish in Jeru-  
 salem." The word here translated *decease* is *Exodus*, and  
 the notion it involves has been embodied in well-nigh every  
 Paschal homily and hymn of the ancient Church. It was Hugo Card.  
 then, in the LORD's own Exodus, in the coming of His people  
 out of the midst of His enemies, that Judah became His  
 sanctuary, because He consecrated His Jewish Apostles to  
 the office of discipling, baptizing, confirming, and teaching



S. John iv.  
22.

Honorius.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.

D. C.

Gerbert.  
de Mus.  
Sacr. i. 5.

the Gentiles, so that, in His own words "salvation is of the Jews." And then His people, no longer a mere house of *Jacob*, wrestling against sin, became *Israel His dominion*, because, prevalent with God, they are also able in the power of His might to resist all sins and temptations, while they hallow His Name in their capacity as *Judah*, giving Him continual "praise." The idea of the march of Israel out of Egypt, as typical of the Christian pilgrimage, has been for many centuries musically suggested by the employment throughout the Western Church of the *Tonus Peregrinus*, or "Pilgrim's Chant," (an irregular form of the eighth Gregorian tone,) for this particular Psalm, a custom said to be immediately derived from the traditional use of the Synagogue, and thus blending, even more than in any other use of the Psalter by Christians, the most august and victorious memories of the Old and New Testaments.

S. John  
Damasc.  
Canon for  
Low Sun-  
day.

Come, ye faithful, raise the strain,  
Of triumphant gladness!  
God hath brought His Israel  
Into joy from sadness:  
Loosed from Pharaoh's bitter yoke  
Jacob's sons and daughters;  
Led them with unmoistened foot  
Through the Red Sea waters.

'Tis the Spring of souls to-day,  
CHRIST hath burst His prison;  
And from three days' sleep in death  
As a sun, hath risen.  
All the winter of our sins,  
Long and dark, is flying  
From His light, to Whom we give  
Laud and praise undying.

Ewald.

Perowne.

One other peculiarity of the second verse requires attention. It twice uses the word *His*, without naming any one. There are two theories to account for this circumstance. One is that Psalm cxiv. was always sung in immediate connection with cxiii., in which the Name of God occurs no less than six times, so that the continuance of the train of thought made a fresh repetition of it here unnecessary. But this view, to be fully consistent with itself, must assume that the two Psalms are really one, with a merely arbitrary division, which does not, on the face of the matter, seem by any means probable, as the scope of thought in the two is perfectly distinct. The other, which is more satisfactory, regards the omission of the Holy Name in this part of the Psalm as a poetical artifice to heighten the effect of the answer to the sudden apostrophe in verses five and six. There would be nothing marvellous in the agitation of sea, and river, and mountains in the presence of God, but it may



well appear wonderful till that potent cause is revealed, as it is most forcibly in the dignified words of the seventh verse.

3 The sea saw that, and fled : Jordan was driven back.

Two miracles of the same class, though parted from one S. Chrysost. another by an interval of forty years in time and a wide distance in space, are here coupled, to teach us that God's power extends everywhere, and is not tied down by any limits of space or time, and also because they mark the beginning and end of the Hebrew pilgrimage. The word *fled*, refers to the passage, "The LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided ;" while *driven back*, applied to Jordan, tells that "the waters that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off." In the one particular of the pathway between two walls of water to allow the passage of Israel, the two miracles precisely agree, and find a partial parallel in classical poetry, as when Cyrene makes a road through a river to her palace for her son Aristæus :

Ex. xiv. 21.

Josh. iii. 16.

Simul alta jubet discedere late  
Flumina, qua juvenis gressus inferret, at illum  
Curvata in montis speciem circumstetit unda,  
Accepitque sinu vasto.

Virg. Georg.  
iv. 359.

Meanwhile, she bids the deep streams widely part,  
Where the youth's steps should enter, and the wave,  
Curved like a mountain, compassed him about,  
And took him to its bosom vast.

Mystically, the fleeing of the sea is explained as the alarm C. of sinners, and especially of Gentile heathens, at the Gospel tidings, and their consequent abandonment of their former habits. There is more variety in the treatment of the latter clause of the verse. Some, pointing out, truly enough, that *Jordan* means "the descender," and that its course terminates in the Dead Sea, take it as a type of those who sin, not from ignorance, but from passion, and from being hurried along, like a swift river, by the cares and temptations of the world. These are suddenly stayed in their course, and are *driven back*, that is, converted by penitence to God, from the headlong descent into the abyss of death to which they had been hurrying, according to His own call, "Turn ye unto Him from Whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted." And in this special sense many of those who interpret the sea as the Gentiles will have it that Jordan has special reference to the Jews. Others bring in the idea of Baptism, as connected with the Jordan, and treat it variously. Thus it is sometimes combined with the exposition

S. Bruno  
Carth.  
Honorius.

Hugo Card.

Isa. xxxi. 6.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.



just given above, and interpreted of the conversion and baptism of those who were hurrying into the bitter sea of Gentile idolatry from terror at the sufferings of the Martyrs, but who retraced their steps to Bethabara, to receive the baptism, not of John, but of Jesus. Or again, it is taken without this special limitation, of all penitents who are converted and received into the Church. A further interpretation is that the river stands for the whole tide of human passions and affections, and that this tide is driven backward, and made to rise "upon an heap" when men abandon earthly thoughts, and set their affections on things on high; not fleeing from God, like the sea, but to Him, because of love which casteth out fear.

Hesychius.

Ay.

Ricard.

Victorin.

Josh. iii. 16.

S. Pet.

Chrysos.

Serm. 160.

4 The mountains skipped like rams : and the little hills like young sheep.

Targum.

Exod. xix.

18.

Lyranus.

Ay.

Numb. xxi.

14.

Jer. iv. 24.

Agellius.

Exod. xv.

15.

Here the Psalmist turns to the earthquake when the Law was given on Sinai. But there is a curious Hebrew tradition to the effect that when the children of Israel were in the valley of Arnon, between Moab and the Amorites, the mountains on the further side bent down to allow them an easy passage; and in this sense they interpret that verse from the lost Book of the Wars of the Lord, "what He did in the Red Sea, and in the brooks of Arnon, and at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab." If we take the words as denoting the terror and dismay of the mountains ("I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly,") we may very well explain the verse figuratively of the dread which fell upon the Canaanite chieftains at the news of the advance of Israel, according to the Song of Moses: "Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold of them, all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away;" and may carry on this reference further to the alarm of the kings and great ones of the earth at the coming of CHRIST, when Herod, and at a later day, Pilate, feared greatly, and when the Roman Empire put out all its strength ten times from its seven-hilled capital against the Faith. But the majority of the commentators, looking to the idea of rejoicing which the Hebrew יִקְדָּו may imply here, as it certainly does in Eccl. iii. 4, and which is undoubtedly included in the LXX. ἐκπλησθαι, the Vulgate *exultaverunt*, the English *skipped*, prefer to take the words first as a personification of the gladness of Canaan at the coming of God to overthrow the idol shrines on many a hill, which they may be regarded as eager to shake off, and then as denoting the exultation of the Apostles, those great mountains of God, *rams*, as leaders of His flock; and that of the inferior disciples, (*little*, indeed, in

C.

S. Bruno  
Carth.



comparison with giants like Peter and Paul, James and John, Honorius.  
 but yet *hills*, raised above the ordinary level of earth, and Ay.  
*young sheep* of His pasture Who carries the lambs in His Isa. xl. 11.  
 bosom,) in the grace, mercy, and truth of JESUS CHRIST.

Ipsi lætitia voces ad sidera jactant  
 Intensi montes: ipsæ jam carmina rupes,  
 Ipsa sonant arbusta, Deus, deus ille.

Virg. Eclog.  
 v. 6.

With joy the shaggy mountains send their voice  
 Up to the stars, the rocks break out in song,  
 The very copses echo, He is God!

5 What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest:  
 and thou, Jordan, that thou wast driven back?

6 Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams: and  
 ye little hills, like young sheep?

The bold personification and address here, which constitute the chief beauty of the Psalm, have not been lost sight of by the commentators, who explain the first verse of the astonishment of the world at the sudden cessation of the fierce pagan assaults on Christianity, when the Empire bowed to the Cross just ten years after Diocletian had proclaimed his successful extirpation of the hated creed, and the still greater bewilderment which seized on Gentile philosophy in seeing Saints, even according to the view of enlightened heathens, made out of the unpromising material of harlots, felons, and outcasts of society. Still more happily they take the second verse of the astonishment of the persecutors at the joy with which the Christian Martyrs received sentence of death, and went to the rack, the stake, the arena, and the scaffold, as though to a bridal or a throne, as indeed they were going to both, had their judges but known it, "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name."

Ay.

Acts v. 41.

7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the  
 Lord; at the presence of the God of Jacob;

8 Who turned the hard rock into a standing  
 water: and the flint-stone into a springing well.

Here is the answer to the question in the previous verses: Nothing but the presence of God Himself could so have wrought on the mightiest of inanimate things, sea, and flood, and mountain, as to cause them to flee and shake, as the Greek tragic poet sings:

τρέμει δ' ὅρη καὶ γαῖα καὶ πελάριος  
 βυθὸς θαλάσσης, τ' ὄρεων ὕψος μέγα·  
 ἐπ' αὖ ἐπιβλήῃ γοργὸν ὄμμα Δεσπότητος,  
 πάντα δυνάτη γὰρ δόξα θείου.

Æschyl.  
 Fragm.



The mountains quake, and earth, and the abyss  
Of mighty ocean, and the lofty hills,  
When the LORD's awful eye but looks on them,  
For the Most High in glory hath all might.

Do not these words, asks S. Clement of Alexandria, seem a paraphrase of *The earth was shaken at the presence of the Lord?* (LXX.) It is well said *the earth* here, for if the mountains, themselves but a small part of the earth, skipped at the giving of the Law, far greater wonders accompanied the revelation of CHRIST in the Gospel. And He showed His face in four ways, living, dying, judging, reigning. The first is the face of His poverty, in lowly birth and sorrowful life; the second of His sorrow in His Passion; the third of His wrath against sin; the fourth of the delight which the open vision of Him shall give His elect. And each of these aspects of His countenance appeals to men that they may be moved from mere earthly things and turn to Him. The last verse is variously explained, and first, accepting S. Paul's gloss, that the smitten Rock was CHRIST. He was a Rock whence no streams appeared to flow to His doubting disciples, when He revealed to them the mystery of the Real Presence of His Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Altar, and they answered, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" But after He was smitten with the rod of the Cross, and rose again, He opened to them the Scriptures, and by showing them the types concerning Him in the Law and the Prophets, writings confined to the narrow circle of the Jewish nation, He turned Himself, the Rock, into that *standing water*; but by sending the Paraclete on the Apostles, and giving them knowledge of all tongues, that they might preach Him in all lands, He made Himself into a *springing well*, and lo, His brook became a river, and His river became a sea.

1 Cor. x. 4.  
Honorius.

S. John vi.  
60.

Ecclus.  
xxiv. 31.

C.

Again, they take the *rock* to be the hard hearts of the Jews, converted into the calm stillness of Christian belief, and the *flintstone* the equally indurated Gentiles, nevertheless brought to be preachers of that very Word to which they were at first insensible. And finally God turns the stony heart of the sinner into a heart of flesh, and causes it to shed copious floods of penitential tears, and turns all the hardness and suffering of earth into the abundant joys of heaven; truly a *standing water*, because it is an exhaustless reservoir, an unruffled ocean of bliss, and a *springing well*, because it has no monotony, but is ever fresh and new.

Hugo Card.

Wherefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD God of Jacob; glory be to the SON, the Prince of Judah, His Sanctuary; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who is those rivers of living water which spring up within the Saints unto everlasting life.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.



## COLLECTS.

O God, unspeakable Name of Trinity, Who didst awe the streams of Jordan with the aspect of Thy light, grant that Thou mayest never suffer those whom Thou hast washed and renewed in Holy Baptism to be defiled with the idols of image-worship. (5.) Ludolph

O God, mightiest of all beings, Who turnest the rock into standing waters, let the earth of our bodies be moved to repentance at Thy presence, that there may thence be glory to Thy Name for mercifully granting us salvation in everlasting blessedness. (1.) D. C.

## PSALM CXV.

This Psalm is reckoned in Syriac, Æthiopic, LXX., and Vulgate, as part of the preceding one, is numbered therefore as 113, and has no separate Antiphons nor Uses in the office-books. This peculiarity is found even in some Hebrew MSS., though there can be no reasonable doubt of the completeness of Ps. cxiv. in itself.

I Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the praise : for thy loving mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

The Psalmist begins with a prayer that God will put forth His might, for the vindication of His Name, and of the Law which He gave, against the scoffing idolaters who despised the feeble remnant which returned out of exile to Jerusalem. It is, in fact, asking Him to fulfil the promise that He made by the mouth of Ezekiel, when, declaring the terrible overthrow of the armies of Gog, He added : "And I will set My glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see My judgment that I have executed, and My hand that I have laid upon them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward. And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity : because they trespassed against Me, therefore hid I My face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies ; so fell they all by the sword. According to their uncleanness, and according to their transgressions, have I done unto them, and hid My face from them. Therefore thus saith the LORD GOD, Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for My holy Name." Ezek. xxxix. 21.

The words *Not unto us* are doubled, in order to express the



- deep sense of personal unworthiness entertained by the sup-  
 pliants; and we may take them also as denoting the blended  
 prayers of the two great constituent elements of the Church,  
 Jew and Gentile. The words befit us now as much as they  
 did the struggling Hebrew Church. *Not unto us, O Lord,*  
*not unto us, but unto Thy Name give the praise,* is the cry of  
 this time, when the Angels are crying "Glory to God in the  
 highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." And the  
 LORD saith, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to  
 My FATHER." He is the FATHER's glory, and He saith,  
 Touch Me not. Seek not glory here, shun it rather, and see  
 that ye touch Me not till we come unto the FATHER, where  
 all glorying shall be secure. For there "my soul shall make  
 her boast in the LORD, the humble shall hear thereof, and be  
 glad."
- C. *For Thy loving mercy and for Thy truth's sake.* God's  
 honour is concerned in delivering His people, in order to  
 show that *loving mercy*, and not the caprice of a despot, has  
 been the motive of His dealings with them; and His *truth* is  
 no less concerned in fulfilling His promises made to them,  
 and in executing His threatened judgments upon the heathen  
 who have not called upon His Name. By vindicating Him-  
 self in these two fashions, He gives glory to that Name,  
 because He moves His people through gratitude, and His  
 enemies through fear, to worship Him; and that for the dear  
 sake of His mercy and truth, which are JESUS CHRIST.
- Haymo.  
 S. Bernard.  
 Serm. 5, de  
 Omn. Sanct.  
 S. Luke II.  
 14.  
 S. John xx.  
 17.  
 Ps. xxxiv. 2.  
 Didymus.

2 Wherefore shall the heathen say : Where is now  
 their God ?

- C. This is ever the scoff, open or secret, of the persecutors  
 of the righteous, of the slayers of the Martyrs; and is again  
 and again urged on God by His prophets in the Old Testa-  
 ment as a reason for His deliverance of Israel out of each  
 fresh calamity which sin had brought with it. So Moses  
 pleaded with Him after the false report of the spies; so Joel  
 bid the priests cry weeping between the porch and the altar;  
 so Daniel besought in his petition to the LORD. And there is  
 a peculiar force in the verse, remembering, as we may, that  
 the charge of Atheism was brought against both Jews and  
 Christians by the Pagans, on the ground of the absence of  
 all images from their places of worship. So the Proconsul,  
 Statius Quadratus, addressing Polycarp, when endeavouring  
 to persuade him to apostasy, said, "Repent, and say, Away  
 with the Atheists;" words which the aged martyr did there-  
 upon utter, but in a very different sense, and without the  
 denial of CHRIST which was urged on him at the same time.
- L.  
 Numb. xiv.  
 15.  
 Joel II. 17.  
 Dan. ix. 19.  
 Epist. Eccl.  
 Smyrn. de S.  
 Polycarpo.

3 As for our God, he is in heaven : he hath done  
 whatsoever pleased him.



*In heaven*, not as limited there, for in truth most copies of the LXX. and the Roman Psalter add *and in earth*, but as denoting His invisibility, His majesty, His holiness, and His power; while as for us, who recite daily in the Creed that CHRIST ascended into heaven, we can use the words literally and in a local sense impossible to the Jew. *He hath done whatsoever pleased Him*, for all power is given to Him in heaven and in earth, and whatsoever the FATHER doeth, that the SON doeth likewise; in contrast to the heathen idols, mere powerless creatures of man's imagination and skill, of which the Psalmist now begins to speak.

L.  
Agellius.  
Le Blanc.

A.

4 Their idols are silver and gold : even the work of men's hands.

5 They have mouths, and speak not : eyes have they, and see not.

6 They have ears, and hear not : noses have they, and smell not.

7 They have hands, and handle not; feet have they, and walk not : neither speak they through their throat.

*Silver and gold.* By singling out these metals, the most precious materials of which the idols were framed, and pouring contempt upon even these costly images, the Psalmist heightens the scorn which he implies for such as were of inferior price, and which had not the one element of costliness in their favour. And when we bear in mind the Apostle's saying that covetousness is idolatry, we shall be warned that we too may need this lesson against worshipping silver and gold; or the worldly wisdom and specious eloquence which may be compared to these metals. *They have mouths, and speak not.* It is noteworthy that we do not find here *taste not*, which we should expect from the parallelism of the other organs of sense, and which is alleged against idols in Scripture, and it is not inaptly observed that the omission is due to the impossibility of predicating the act of eating of the True God, with Whom the idols are here contrasted, though we may speak of Him as speaking, seeing, hearing, and smelling. Cardinal Hugo, who explains the silver and gold to mean simoniacal, luxurious, and ostentatious prelates, carries on his gloss with unsparring vigour, in which he is supported in well-nigh every particular by S. Albert the Great, saying that *they have mouths, and speak not*, because they always get some one to preach in their stead; *they have eyes and see not*, because they employ Archdeacons and other officials, *oculi Episcoporum*, to do their visitations for them, or rather to collect money, and neglect the real work of souls; *they have ears*, no doubt, for money accounts; and for gossip,

S. Gaudent.  
Brix.  
Agellius.

Hugo Card.  
Col. iii. 5.  
Ricard.  
Victorin.

Z.  
Deut. iv. 28.

Hugo Card.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.



and flattery, but not for hearing the reading of Scripture, nor for advice, nor for listening to rebuke, nor for hearing the cry of the poor and oppressed; and they *have noses*, to smell good dinners and wines, but not the sweet savour of CHRIST, nor the fragrance of Paradise; they *have hands* too, chaplains and other instruments, which they do not employ to heal the wounds of the sick, nor to lift off the burdens of the oppressed, but merely to handle money, and get rich benefices; *feet have they*, but not for walking after God, in the footsteps of CHRIST. *Neither speak they through their throat*, which is not wonderful, seeing that it is too full with the dainties they are tasting, to allow of speech. Of this remarkably plain-spoken piece of testimony Lorinus briefly observes, "It is worth while to read it, but unnecessary to copy it out." A third great preacher, however, takes nearly the same line as the Bishop of Ratisbon and the Cardinal of S. Sabina, comparing to an idol that ecclesiastic who has knowledge, but will not preach, who is careless and lacking in circumspection, who is not obedient, though he can hear a command, who has no delicate sense of discernment of the odours of good and evil, who has the power of doing active good, and neglects it, who makes no advance in holiness, and who employs a deputy in choir and pulpit.

L.

Philip de la  
Grève.  
Serm. 342.

Returning to the literal sense, it is desirable to cite some few words from the powerful attack here made on idolatry by S. Augustine. "The workman is better than they are, for he was able to make them by the movement or action of his members, and yet thou wouldst be ashamed to adore that workman. Thou art better too, though thou didst not make them, for thou canst do what they cannot. A beast is better also \* \* \*. Those people think themselves to be of a purer religion who say, 'I do not worship the image, nor a demon, but I look on the bodily effigy as a sign of that thing which I ought to worship.' And therefore they explain the images, saying that by one of them the earth is signified, whence they call it a shrine of Tellus; by another the sea, as an image of Neptune; another the air, which is Juno; another fire, as Vulcan; the morning-star, as Venus; the sun and moon, to whose statues they give the same kind of names as to that of the earth, and so with this and that star, this or that creature, for we cannot go through with the whole catalogue. And when they begin to be cross-examined as to why they worship bodily things, especially the earth, and sea, and air, and fire, all of which are at our disposal to use, (for they are not so much ashamed of heavenly things, because we cannot bodily handle nor reach them save with the glances of our eyes,) they are bold enough to reply, that they do not worship these bodies themselves, but the divinities which preside over their governance. Therefore the Apostle in one sentence witnesseth to their punishment and condemnation, in that he saith, 'Who changed the truth of God into a

A.

Rom. i. 25.



lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever.' For in the first part of this sentence, he condemned the images, and in the latter, the explanation of the images. And that because by calling the statues made by a workman by the names of things which God has made, they change the glory of God into a lie, and by accounting and worshipping as gods the things themselves, they serve the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever." And S. Ambrose, arguing against the gods of Rome, very aptly remarks: "Geese saved the Roman Capitol from the foe: it is to them, O Rome, that thou truly owest thy dominion. Thy gods were asleep, and the geese kept watch, therefore in those days thou sacrificest to geese, not to Jupiter. For your gods yield precedence to geese, by whom they knew that they were defended, lest they too should be captured by the foe," for they *spake not through their throat*, or, as the Hebrew strictly implies, could not even make a low articulate murmuring, whereas the geese had voice enough to raise an alarm.

Hexæme-  
ron.

8 They that make them are like unto them : and so are all such as put their trust in them.

These words are read by most of the ancient versions as an imprecation : *Let those that make them be like unto them*, which, as Cardinal Bellarmine justly says, is a prayer that Pagans cannot complain of, without yielding the whole point in dispute. Following the English version, we see a deep truth set before us, that there is a close relation between the object of worship and the worshippers, so that one must react on the other. They who adore Mars, will be warlike and predatory ; those who serve Venus, effeminate and profligate ; those who reverence Molech, will be cruel and blood-thirsty. And without looking exclusively to this aspect of the matter, which is forcibly urged against Paganism by some of the early Christian apologists, we may remember how Scripture charges the apostates to idolatry with having "become vain," with having eyes and seeing not God's truth, with having ears, and being deaf to His Word, as we find in that saying by the mouth of Isaiah, cited by CHRIST and by S. Paul, "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not ; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes : lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." *They that put their trust in them*. This is a far lower depth than *making* the idols, as even a Pagan can tell us :

Bellarmino.

Agellius.

3 Kings xvii.  
15.  
Jer. ii. 5.  
Isa. vi. 9.  
S. Matt. xiii.  
14.  
Acts xxviii.  
36.

Qui fingit sacros auro vel marmore vultus  
Non facit ille deos ; qui rogat, ille facit.

Martial.  
Epigr. viii.  
24.



Who moulds in gold or stone a sacred face,  
Makes not the god ; but he who asks his grace.

They who persevere in such fashion, when they have had access to the truth, whether we take the words of literal idolaters, or of those who appoint, elect, or pay court to evil prelates, according to the allegorical sense, shall be made at last like unto the idols, bound hand and foot, so that they cannot move, cast into outer darkness where they cannot see, and where no pleasant thing shall present itself to their other senses. And yet CHRIST is able of these stones, these perverse idolaters, to raise up children unto Abraham, to turn these stony hearts to flesh by the operation of His SPIRIT, to turn them "from these vanities unto the living GOD, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein."

Ay.  
Bellarmine.  
L.

S. Chrysost.  
S. Greg. M.  
S. Luke iii.  
S.

Acts xiv. 15.

9 But thou, house of Israel, trust thou in the LORD : he is their succour and defence.

10 Ye house of Aaron, put your trust in the LORD : he is their helper and defender.

11 Ye that fear the LORD, put your trust in the LORD : he is their helper and defender.

Tholuck. It appears almost certain, from the structure of these three verses, with their recurring refrain (which is identical in all, and not varied as above,) *He is their help and their shield* ; that a change here was made in the musical and liturgical use of the Psalm, as the first eight verses seem to be intended to be sung with a full choir, and then the first strophe of each of the three succeeding ones as a solo, with full response from the choir again. The references to the whole Hebrew nation in the ninth verse, and to the Priesthood in the tenth, perhaps also the entire Levitical body (as in Ps. cxxxv. 20,) by reason of its peculiar dignity, are obvious enough ; but there is some variety of interpretation as to the persons meant by the phrase, *Ye that fear the Lord*. One view is, that it is merely complementary of what has gone before, and expresses that Israel and Aaron, the laity and priesthood of the Jewish Church, make up the sum of all the true worshippers of God. A second opinion extends the meaning to all devout persons of Gentile origin, such as Melchizedek, Job, Naaman, and others, who served the LORD faithfully, albeit not under the Law ; and that it thus looks forward to the wider Church of later days, embracing Jew and Gentile alike within the fold. And thirdly, some believe that the proselytes of righteousness, Gentiles who conformed in all particulars to the Jewish creed and polity, and were enrolled in Israel, are alone intended. The second of these interpretations agrees best with the words of S. Peter, "Of a truth I perceive that GOD is no

Bellarmino.

Origen.  
C.

Lyranus.  
Ay.  
Gemetrar.  
duc.

Theodore.  
Z.  
Le Blanc.  
L.

Acts x. 34.



respector of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." The Christian expositors allegorize the verses as denoting all the Catholic Church, as that which "sees God," and then especially its prelates, priests, and religious, with those especial servants of the LORD whose zealous ministry classes them as those that fear Him. The fear and hope ascribed to these last are, as one remarks, the two mill-stones between which man's heart should be ground into fine flour for a thank-offering of pleasant bread for the LORD, twin stones which should never be parted one from the other. And we are bid to take notice how God is thrice named as our help and shield, because He is our defender against those three bands of the Chaldeans which slay and spoil the soul; namely, lust, the special temptation of the young; covetousness, the besetting sin of the old; and pride, which often survives when both the others are dead, and is more perilous than either, according to that proverb:

Hugo Card.

Job i. 17.

*Cum bene pugnaris, cum cuncta subacta putaris,  
Quæ magis infestat, vincenda superbia restat.*

When thou hast fought a good fight, and thinkest all bowed to thy might,  
A sorer foe yet for thy pains, pride still unconquered remains.

And it is written in another place, that "the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies," which are the world, the flesh, and the devil; against all of which the LORD is a help and a shield to such as fear Him and put their trust in Him.

1 Sam. xiii. 17.

12 The LORD hath been mindful of us, and he shall bless us: even he shall bless the house of Israel, he shall bless the house of Aaron.

13 He shall bless them that fear the LORD: both small and great.

These two verses, as well as the two next following, seem to be the answer of the officiating Priest to the chorus of the Levites, declaring God's gracious acceptance of the sacrifice and praises they have just been offering, and His favourable regard to each of the other three classes which were called to prayer by the voice of the choir. The LORD hath indeed been mindful of us, and hath blessed us by coming in the flesh, whereby, as being born of Hebrew race, He blessed the house of Israel; He blessed the house of Aaron, by conferring new dignity upon the sacerdotal office, in condescending to be made Himself a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek; He blessed all that feared Him, both small and great, choosing lowly fishermen for His Apostles, taking little

Ewald.

C.

Arnobius. L.



children in His arms and blessing them; yet not despising nor rejecting the princes and great men who then or later humbled themselves to Him. He was mindful of us after He quitted earth in His Ascension, and blessed us by the mission of the HOLY GHOST, a blessing on Israel and Aaron, because He thereby made the members of His Church kings and priests with God. He blessed both small and great in the wide embrace of His love, "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, but CHRIST is all, and in all." He blessed them not with one blessing, but with two, "blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep which lieth under," blessing for contemplative and for active spirits, for time and for eternity.

Coloss. iii.  
11.  
Hugo Card.

Gen. xlix.  
26.

14 The LORD shall increase you more and more :  
you and your children.

15 Ye are the blessed of the LORD : who made  
heaven and earth.

Bellarmino. There is an obvious reference in these two verses, forming the close of the priestly benediction in the Psalm, to the two great tests of divine favour in Jewish eyes, fruitfulness in progeny, so as to ensure national strength, and fertility of the soil, to provide abundantly for the wants of the people. So for the first part Moses addresses the children of Israel :  
Deut. i. 10. "The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as He hath promised you." And the meaning of the reference to *heaven and earth* may be found in the blessing of Isaac to Jacob : "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine." But having regard to the denunciation of idols in the former part of the Psalm, it is probable that the title of Maker of heaven and earth is here given to the LORD to distinguish Him from the false deities of the heathen. And this is in close keeping with the tone of that passage of Jeremiah which is written in Chaldee, as though to prevent any risk of Hebrew being too difficult for the sons of the exiles in Babylon, "Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens," a lesson which Israel learnt thoroughly in the hard school of the Captivity.

A.  
Honorius.  
B.  
The blessing has come in a fuller sense upon the true Israel, in that God has increased it more and more, raising up fresh children to Abraham from the dead stones of Gentile heathenism, children in true spiritual descent from those Prophets and kings who desired to see the day of CHRIST; and He increases more and more, as the ages roll on, the faithful



preachers of His Word, and the number of the converts they draw into the body of His Church, the chosen sanctuary of Him Who hath made heaven and earth, Who hath made those holy teachers who pour down the refreshing rain of the Gospel, and the faithful flocks who receive it, and bring forth fruits abundantly to the LORD, and also minister unto them that teach them, in all good things.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Gal. vi. 6.

16 All the whole heavens are the LORD's : the earth hath he given to the children of men.

Here, as it would seem, the congregation chimes in with its choral response at the close of the priestly blessing. The first clause of the verse is somewhat paraphrased by the Prayer Book. The Hebrew may stand, as LXX., Syriac, and Vulgate take it, *The heaven of heaven is the Lord's*; or, as A. V., *The heavens, even the heavens are the Lord's*; or lastly, as modern critics prefer, *The heavens are the Lord's heavens*. There is, however, no great difference of meaning, as the intention is to magnify the LORD by representing the highest heavens as His palace and dwelling-place, whence He looks down upon the earth, and the men whom He has made to serve Him therein. Mystically, *the heaven of heavens*, the full attributes of Godhead, are the possession of the LORD JESUS, Who hath given the Church on earth to us for our guidance, and the holy earth of His most sacred Body as the food of the children of men in that Church. The heaven of heavens, too, the highest Saints, those Apostles and Evangelists who derived their teaching directly from Himself, whom He adorned with the sun of wisdom, the moon of eloquence, the stars of miracles and holiness, are His; as are likewise those lower heavens of great Saints of later days, Athanasius, Basil, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory, whose knowledge was less directly obtained; while the whole expanse of His Church is not kept merely for those eminent in wisdom and virtue, like these, but is thrown open to the children of men, to all that are willing to enter in. It is told of Nivard, youngest brother of S. Bernard, that when all the elder sons of the family had resolved to enter the monastic order, Guy de Fontanes, the senior amongst them, said to the boy, "Farewell, my little brother Nivard, you will have all the estates and lands to yourself;" and the lad answered, "What, you take heaven for your portion, and leave me only the earth! The division is too unequal." Hence we are taught, that though the earth is given by God to the children of men, yet He has a better country, even heaven, to give to such as will seek it, who are sons of God, not mere children of men, and who can win heaven by exchanging earth for it, in contempt of riches and luxury, of lands and houses, and all things which are not of the Gospel.

Anastas.  
Sinait.

Hugo Card.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
Honorius.

L.

Le Blanc.

Agellius.



17 The dead praise not thee, O LORD : neither all they that go down into silence.

L.

In the mind of the Jew, with his very imperfect realization of the life of the world to come, one main reason for being zealous in the praise of the LORD was the thought that this life might be, and probably was, the only one in which He could be fully worshipped by men, and that it therefore behoved them to be frequent in their attendance on His public service, and ready with their voices and instruments to join in the Psalmody of the Temple. The word *dead*, however, may very possibly here have reference to the eighth verse, in which the worshippers of idols are said to be like unto them ; and as the idols themselves are most probably intended in the mention of "offerings of the dead" in a previous Psalm, we may fairly take the contrast here in the two last verses to be not between living and dead Jews, but between worshippers of the LORD and worshippers of

S. Athanasius.  
Theodoret.

Ps. cvi. 28.

R.

S. Macarius.  
Hom. 49.  
S. Cyrill.  
Hierosol.  
Catech. 18.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Rom. vi. 4,  
11.

idols. But the deeper Christian sense explains it of sinners, dead even while living, through lack of grace and spiritual vitality, in this world ; and cut off in the next, if finally impenitent, from all share in that praise of God which rises eternally in heaven. There are, however, dead who can praise the LORD, those blessed ones who have died in Him, whose death is precious in His sight, who are dead indeed to sin here : "buried with Him by baptism into death," or who, killed for His sake in the body, are yet alive to Him in soul and spirit. To these, and such as these, the last verse belongs :

18 But we will praise the LORD : from this time forth for evermore. Praise the LORD.

C.

The LXX., Arabic, and Vulgate, fill in the suggested idea, reading, as they do, *But we who live, will praise the Lord* ; for "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living ;" that is, not of those who possess mere physical vitality, but of such as live the life of grace, who shall praise Him, *from this time forth*, beginning at once in faith, good works, and holiness, and persevering to the very end, to that other life of glory, where *for evermore* the unceasing Alleluias of the conquerors ascend to their King.

S. Matt.  
xxii. 32.

D. C.  
Hugo Card.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, Whose are the heavens of heavens ; glory be to the SON, Who is our help and shield ; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who increaseth us more and more.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.



## COLLECTS.

Be Thou, O LORD, our helper and defender, as we put our *Ludolph.* trust in Thee, and remembering that Thou hast made us of the earth, grant that we may ever live in heavenly praise. (1.)

Remember us, O LORD, and bless us, and lest we should *Mozarabic.* turn from Thee in forgetfulness of mind, bring us back to think on Thee, and as Thou didst deliver Israel out of Egypt in type, so vouchsafe to separate us from the pollution of the world. (11.)

O LORD, Who sitting on high in the heavens, holdest and *Mozarabic.* guidest the powers of earth, give glory to Thy Name, give pardon to sinners, and whatever we dare to hope from Thy mercy, let us drink in verily that we ask, that Thy mercy may keep idols afar from the congregation of Thy Church, and Thy truth may convert doubting hearts to the knowledge of Thy worship. Add, we pray Thee, O LORD, Thy blessing upon Thy people, and on their sons' sons, Who art salvation unto life eternal to them that fear Thee; grant the crown which Thou hast promised, that we may not be cast out from Thy blessing, as dead in sins, but made partakers of life, may praise Thy Name for evermore. (11.)

PSALM CXVI.<sup>1</sup>

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

## ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. First Section: That CHRIST delivers our souls from the perils of hell. It is the Voice of CHRIST. The Voice of CHRIST as King to be delivered out of trouble and pain by humility, and also of His members. He giveth thanks to GOD, Who always healeth them that ask in prayer. Second Section: That we shall especially pay our vows to CHRIST in the Heavenly Jerusalem. The Voice of Paul the Apostle. The Voice of the HOLY GHOST by the Prophet concerning the death of the Saints; or the Voice of Paul the Apostle and those like unto him. He shows, moreover that no payment can be made for divine benefits, save with the Cup of the LORD which is drunk in the precious death of His Saints. The fifth and sixth edition couple this Psalm with the preceding, but Symmachus and the Seventy interpreters divide it. The Voice of the Martyrs to CHRIST.

<sup>1</sup> This Psalm is divided at verse 9 in the LXX. and Vulgate reckoning, and numbered as 114 and 115. It has thus double Arguments, and distinct Uses, as noted above.



**VEN. BEDÆ.** First Section: A solemn and truthful warning rouses us from the sleep of this world. The Prophet, delivered from the deep pit of sins, and set, moreover, on that rock of mercy, in the first part gives thanks because he knows that he has been heard; and declares that he effectually called upon the LORD against all perils of death: *I am well pleased that the Lord hath heard, &c.* Secondly, he cries again unto the LORD, that being set free he may attain that everlasting rest which he promises to the faithful, as certain to be conferred by the LORD's bounty: *O Lord, deliver my soul.* Second Section: Throughout the Psalm the words of the unconquered Martyrs are referred to. In the first portion they commemorate the benefits of the LORD, and when they feel doubt as to what worthy return can be made for these, there occurs truly that glorious cup of martyrdom, which however is bestowed by the LORD's bounty: *I believed, &c.* The second choir confesses itself the LORD's servant, and the son of the Catholic Church, lest thou shouldst suppose that the martyrdom of heretics is also pleasing unto the LORD: *O Lord, how that I am Thy servant, &c.*

**SYRIAC PSALTER.** Anonymous. The advance of the new people returning to the Christian religion like a child to understanding. And it is spoken, literally, of the time when Saul came and tarried at the mouth of the cave where David and his men lay hid.

**EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA.** First portion: The improvement of the new people. Second portion: The perfection of the new people.

**S. ATHANASIUS.** A Psalm of thanksgiving.

#### VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* Monday: Vespers. [First portion, 1—9. Office of the Dead: Vespers. Second portion, 10—16. Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Corpus CHRISTI, Five Wounds, Spear and Nails: Vespers. Common of Apostles: II. Vespers. Common of One and Many Martyrs: II. Vespers.]

*Ambrosian.* Monday: Vespers.

*Parisian.* First portion. Monday: Vespers. Second portion. Thursday: Vespers.

*Lyons.* Monday: Vespers.

*Quignon.* First portion. Monday: Sext. Second portion. Monday: Vespers.

#### ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian and Monastic.* First portion: The LORD hath inclined \* His ear to me. Second portion: I believed \* and therefore I spake. [Office of the Dead: I will please \* the LORD in the land of the living. Maundy Thursday: I will receive the cup of salvation, \* and call upon the Name of the LORD. Corpus CHRISTI: I will receive the cup of salvation, \* and offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Common of Apostles: Thou hast broken, O LORD, my bonds; I will offer Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.]

*Ambrosian.* First portion: In my days \* I will call upon the LORD. Second portion: I believed and therefore I spoke.

*Parisian.* First portion: Turn again then unto thy rest, O my



soul, for the LORD hath rewarded thee. Second portion : First verse.

*Lyons as Gregorian.*

*Mozarabic.* First portion : Gracious is the LORD, and righteous, \* yea, our GOD is merciful. Second portion : I will please the LORD \* in the land of the living.

There is a Jewish tradition that this Psalm was a thanksgiving of Hezekiah after his recovery from sickness, and there are so many parallelisms of language between it and the story of that event as recorded by Isaiah, that no reasonable doubt remains that the Psalm is directly based on the Prophet's narrative. But the Chaldee forms with which the Psalm abounds make the diction of the two far less alike in Hebrew than in English, and fix the date of the composition at a much later period, most probably immediately after the return from the Captivity. It is possible that the Psalm is purely typical, and that the Jewish nation is personified as the speaker ; but there is no improbability in the supposition that the primary sense implies a thanksgiving for the recovery of some eminent Hebrew chief, prince or priest, from a dangerous illness.

1 I am well pleased : that the LORD hath heard the voice of my prayer ;

*I am well pleased.* The Hebrew is stronger, and is rightly translated by LXX., Vulgate, and A.V., *I love*. The Syriac and Arabic Versions interpret this as meaning, *I earnestly desired* that the LORD would hear my prayer, but it is far better to take the sense with A.V., *I love the Lord*, because He hath heard my voice. Let this be the song of the soul which is in its pilgrimage, afar from God ; let this be the song of that sheep which was lost, let this be the song of that son who was dead and is alive again, who was lost and found ; let this be the song of our own soul. It is enough for the Psalmist to say, *I have loved*, without naming any object, for only God, or that which is loved for His sake in His way can be the object of true love. God *heard the voice* of His Saints under the Law, desiring the Incarnation, and He hears us still under the Gospel, as we pray for everlasting salvation. The Latins dwell on the form of the tenses here in the Vulgate, *I have loved*, for the LORD *will hear*, as denoting, on the one hand, not merely the affection born of benefits, such as even the heathen entertain, but that deeper, surer, truer love of God, which turns to Him even in trouble, with unswerving faith. It is thus no promise for the future, but a declaration of a fully formed habit, namely, that love and obedience which is the fulfilling of the Law.

Most fitly, then, may the words be taken as those of the LORD JESUS, Whose love for His FATHER and for mankind led Him to undertake the work of our redemption, in order to bear all the bitter sorrows of His Passion, in order, to use

A.

S. Ambrose.  
Hugo Card.

C.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
S. Ambrose.

Hugo Card.



S. John xiv. 31; xv. 13. His own language, "That the world may know that I love the FATHER, even so I do;" and again, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Wherefore God *heard the voice* of His prayer, and granted Him that He asked, His own victorious Resurrection, and the salvation of them that believe in His Name.

2 That he hath inclined his ear unto me : therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

Hugo Card. S. John xi. 41. The Incarnate SON can use these words, for He hath Himself said, "FATHER, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me, and I knew that Thou hearest Me always;" and He did call upon Him continually, not only on earth, but still continues to do so in His intercessory office as our High Priest in Heaven.

Heb. v. 7. *As long as I live.* The literal Hebrew, followed by LXX. and Vulgate is, *In my days*. And, spoken of Our LORD, the Apostle will gloss them for us, "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard for His piety; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered."

Honorius. C. As for us, the LORD Himself stooped down His ear to us by His Incarnation, bending, like the good Samaritan, over the half-dead body of man, who had fallen among spiritual thieves when he turned his back on Jerusalem, and was stripped and wounded by them. And the sinner, remembering this great mercy, says, *I will call upon Him in my days*. Not in *His* days, but *my* days; days which I have made my own by my own sin, filling myself with my own devices, and thereby bringing trouble, perplexity, and distress upon me. And because my sin is so frequent, those days are all the days of my mortal life. The Carmelite, reminding us that our prayers are all made through CHRIST JESUS, and that wisdom cometh by hearing, tells us that He, the Eternal Wisdom, by Whom we make our supplication known, is Himself that *ear* which the FATHER bent down to earth to hear the faint murmur of suffering which was all that feeble man had strength to utter.

S. Athanasius.  
Origen.  
Ay.

S. Basil. M.

3 The snares of death compassed me round about : and the pains of hell gat hold upon me.

*The snares of death.* More exactly, with S. Jerome, *the cords of death*, a reference, doubtless, to the ropes with which persons doomed to execution were bound, and therefore represented sufficiently by the LXX. Vulgate, and A.V. *pains*. We may then take these cords of death to be the qualities of mortality and passibility which we inherit naturally, and

S. Bruno  
Carth.



which the LORD voluntarily accepted for our sake, and we may understand them literally of the ropes with which He was bound in the garden, when the *pains of hell*, or with LXX. and Vulgate, *perils of hell*, the near approach of the agonising death of the Cross, found Him. Another view, however, is that the *perils of hell* is a metaphor for sinners in danger of being lost, and that these, the harlot in the city, the woman in adultery, the thief on the cross, *found* CHRIST, and finding Him were saved. One commentator explains the torture of the rack as the idea intended by *cords of death*, and in that case we may very well read the verse as the cry of the Martyrs in their passion, as they hung extended on the "little horse," with all their bones out of joint, while they awaited the yet more horrible tortures to which it was but the preliminary.

Hugo Card.

Cajetan.

The sinner, too, may use the verse most truly, not only of those bodily disorders which hurry him to the grave, but of the sorer spiritual maladies which sin has brought upon him. The *cords of death* are any mortal sins, evil thoughts, and carnal indulgence. And it is well said that these cords *compassed me round about*, for sin attacks man on every side; in front, by making him careless of things eternal; behind, by causing him to love things earthly; on the right hand, lulling him by prosperity; on the left, crushing him by adversity; above him, by tempting him to vain-confidence; below, by goading him to despair of pardon. The *pains of hell* are temptations, ignorance, suggestions of the enemy, and evil works. The word in Hebrew is neither *pains*, nor *perils*, but *straits*, narrownesses,<sup>1</sup> and implies the extreme difficulty of extrication, the closeness with which the peril draws near, as in the case of a path of a few inches in breadth along the edge of a precipice. *Got hold upon me*. The LXX. and Vulgate, rightly, *found me*. Where note that the peril of hell because of sin *finds* a man who has lapsed without deliberate purpose, through ignorance, or sudden temptation, but man himself finds sin when he offends deliberately and against knowledge.

L.

Pseudo-

Hieron.

Hugo Card.

R.

Arnobius.

Bellarmine.

Ay.

4 I shall find trouble and heaviness, and I will call upon the Name of the LORD : O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

There are many who, though compassed by the cords of death and threatened by the perils of hell, give no heed thereto, busied as they are with worldly concerns, and lulled

<sup>1</sup> *ṣṣp*, found only in Ps. cxviii. 5, and Lam. i. 8. Hupfeld, thinking the term inapt, suggests *ṣṣp*, "nets," as in Job

xix. 6 and Eccl. vii. 26, but he seems to have forgotten the precisely analogous use of the Latin *angustia*.



- into dangerous security by their prosperous condition ; but the Psalmist is wiser, and looking forward to peril and suffering, beseeches the LORD to deliver him in the evil day.
- S. Basil. M. Or we may take it, if we understand the previous verse as a confession of deadly sin, that this one is a promise of penitence and self-infliction, of lamentation for the guilt committed, followed by a prayer to God for pardon. And in this sense the Psalmist rightly says, *I have found trouble and heaviness*, for grievous as they are, yet no small treasure lies hid in them for the penitent soul ; or, if you prefer it, they are the physicians whom the penitent needs to seek out that he may be healed of his disorder. A Saint does not wait for tribulation to find him out, but seeks it voluntarily, "knowing that tribulation worketh patience ; and patience, experience ; and experience, hope : and hope maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the HOLY GHOST which is given unto us." And then we may most fitly apply the words *I shall find* to Him Who deliberately sought the shame and agony of the Passion, as the only road by which He might recover the lost sheep ; but Who, nevertheless, prayed to His FATHER to deliver His soul from the grave by the might of the Resurrection.
- C. We, when we use this prayer, confess that our soul is held captive by sin ; and in that the Psalmist asks for rescue of his *soul*, and not of his body, it appears that the *trouble* and *heaviness* of which he complains are spiritual, and not temporal afflictions.
- Rom. v. 3.
- Hugo Card.
- Honorius.

5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous : yea, our God is merciful.

- S. Ambros.  
Theodoret.  
S. Chrysost.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.
- A. There are two epithets here to denote God's mercy, and but one for His justice, which is set in the midst of the two others, as fenced by them on each side, in order to teach us that God's mercy prevaieth against judgment, and the present tense is used, because this is always so with Him, not a matter of the past or the future only. The LORD is *gracious*, because He inclines His ear to the sinner calling on Him ; He is *righteous*, because He chastises him ; He is *merciful*, because after chastisement, He receives him again to pardon and favour. And though God's mercy be greater than His judgment, yet the position of the words here teaches us that all true mercy must have justice in the midst of it, and therefore that God is bound by His own laws to deal justly with the sinner even in the very act of showing mercy to him. The Greek Fathers bid us see a special stress in the phrase *Our God*, as contrasting His love and righteousness with the capricious and wanton cruelty ascribed by the heathen to their gods. And we may put the whole verse into the mouth of our LORD upon the Cross, addressing them to His Mother and His disciples to com-
- Theodoret.  
S. Basil. M.
- Hugo Card.



fort them in their affliction, and to infuse the hope of His Resurrection into their hearts.

6 The LORD preserveth the simple : I was in misery, and he helped me.

*The simple.* That is, such as are unversed in worldly artifices, and unable by any mental power of their own to foresee and guard against the snares of the devil, those cords of death and straits of hell which compass them about. Such as these are not left to the wiles of their enemies, for God *preserveth* them. The LXX. and Vulgate, instead of *simple*, read *little children* (*ἑταῖρα, parvulos*), but there is no great difference of interpretation, as the commentators agree that the word is not to be limited to its literal construction, but to be extended to all those who, born again in the laver of regeneration, have become as little children in docility and guilelessness, that they may enter into the kingdom of God. Such as these, little in their own sight, but increasing in stature through the bounty of God alone, He preserves, like a good shepherd, from the jaws of the ravening wolf; and not only them, but such as are mere beginners in the way of godliness, and have as yet no spiritual vigour to defend themselves. And the Psalmist adds that humility, the act of submitting himself, was the means of his deliverance, saying, *I was brought low* (A.V., LXX., Vulg.), and *He helped me*. So it is told of S. Antony that seeing in a vision countless snares and pitfalls made ready against men by the enemies of the soul, he asked in terror, "LORD, who can escape all these?" and that he received in answer, "The humble."

Cocceius.  
Agellius.

Theodor.  
Mopsuest.

C.

Ay.

L.

7 Turn again unto thy rest, O my soul : for the LORD hath rewarded thee.

It is probable that the primary intention in this verse has reference to the return of Israel from captivity into the Land of Promise, which is actually styled "rest" in one place, while in two others the notion is coupled with that of deliverance from exile: "I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid." But there may very well be a larger sense, applicable to all believers, of discarding their anxiety and doubt, and returning to complete tranquillity of mind, as being sensible of God's bounty in past deliverance, and hopeful of it for the future, in the full spirit of that saying, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." And a favourite interpretation of the verse is that it describes the death of the righteous, who leaves the trouble and discord of this world to enter into the rest which

Agellius.

Deut. xii. 9.

Jer. xxx. 10;  
xli. 27.

Z.

Isa. xxvi. 3.

S. Ambros.



**Bellarmino.** remaineth for the people of God; first in Paradise, and then in the more perfect repose of the heavenly Jerusalem; whence that refrain in the Office of the Dead, "Eternal rest grant unto them, O LORD, and light perpetual shine upon them." But whether on earth, or in the grave, or in heaven itself, the source of the rest is one and the same, the only perfect repose is the LORD JESUS, Who saith, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." *For the Lord hath rewarded thee.* So S. Jerome and the Targum, implying that the recovered rest is God's recompense for the humble trust in Him and the zealousness in well-doing which the suppliant has displayed. But the A.V., following LXX., Syriac, and Vulgate, reads *hath dealt bountifully with thee*, words which denote only the magnitude of the benefit conferred, with no reference to man's deservings.

8 And why? thou hast delivered my soul from death : mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

**Bellarmino.** Here are set before us the three chief qualities of the life of the blessed, that bountiful gift of the LORD; immortality, in that we are delivered from death; impassibility, since **Isa. xxxv. 9.** there can be no more sufferings, for "the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away," because "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;" security, in that fall is thenceforward impossible, as it is written, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out." It may be taken also of God's dealing with His elect even in this world, whom He saves from *death*, that is, from mortal sin, by His justifying grace; from *tears*, by delivering us out of temptations; from *falling* by protecting us from the overthrow plotted against us by our invisible foes. Again, we may read the verse of the Gentile Church, delivered from death, when brought out of the worship of lifeless idols and from the grave of sin into the knowledge of God and holiness of life; rescued from tears, when carried safely through the ten fierce persecutions into a time of peace, and from falling, when the slippery wiles of the heretics who endeavoured to supplant the Gospel were defeated in the early General Councils. And finally, we may understand the passage as spoken of the Resurrection and Ascension of CHRIST the LORD, whereby He was released from the pain and sorrow of His life on earth.

9 I will walk before the LORD : in the land of the living.



The LXX. and Vulgate give the force, rather than the literal meaning of the Hebrew in the first clause, translating *I will please the Lord*. It is a vow on the part of the returning exile, coming back to the Holy Land, to the sacred City, that he will there steadily set his face to serve God, in obedience to the Law, in regularity of worship, in frequent offerings, in holiness of life. But the literal Hebrew is here plural, *the lands* of the living, looking forward in prophecy to a wider and more embracing creed than that of the elder dispensation, whence it is explained of the Christian Church, diffused through many lands, and in each of them being the true Eve, the Mother of all living a new life in the Lord. And finally, they all take it of the Church Triumphant, in the highest sense the *land of the living*, since death cannot by any means enter therein, where the elect shall walk *before the Lord*, ever well-pleasing in His sight, ever gladdened themselves by the Beatific Vision; a sense which has pointed the use of the Psalm with this verse as Antiphon in the Vesper Office for the Dead.

Cf. Gen.  
xvii. 1.  
L.

Hugo Card.

10 I believed, and therefore will I speak; but I was sore troubled: I said in my haste, All men are liars.

The Apostle S. Paul, citing the former part of this verse according to the LXX., which is exactly the same as the A.V., *I believed, therefore have I spoken*, teaches us that the Psalmist's meaning is that devout utterance is a necessary outcome of true belief: "We having the same spirit of 2 Cor. iv. 13. faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." It appears then that the immediately preceding words are referred to, and that the utterance of faith is "I shall walk before the Lord in the land of the living." But there is a grammatical difficulty in this construction of the Hebrew, which is somewhat obscure, and various explanations (none of them, however, excluding the Pauline connection between faith and speech,) have been suggested. One takes the particle *אֲנִי* to mean *although*, and translates, *I believe, although I say, I am sore troubled*. That is, while human weakness forces a cry of pain from me, my faith in God remains unshaken. Or again, *אֲנִי* may be *when*: *I believe, when I say, I was sore troubled*; which means, Every time I recall my past sufferings, and remember how God delivered me out of them, my faith in Him is quickened anew. Once more, it may be explained of God's method of teaching by adversity: *I learnt to believe, when I was compelled to say, I am sore troubled*. I trusted in myself, and in my fellow-men, and found neither of any avail, and was therefore driven back upon God for

S. Basil. M.  
Grotius.

Rosen-  
müller.

Ewald.

Delitzsch.  
Kampf-  
hausen.



Theodor.  
Mopsuest.

Targum.  
Agellius.

S. Chrysost.

Isa. xl. 6.

D. C.

Rom. iii. 4.

Jer. xvi. 19.

A.  
Honorius.

succour, and found Him alone true. *I said in my haste.* That is, in the confusion and bewilderment brought on me by the pressure of my sufferings; whence the Chaldee explains the word as meaning, *during my flight*, although several of the Greek and Latin commentators, looking to the LXX. *ἐκτάσει* and the Vulgate *excessu*, take it as also denoting a rapture of divine contemplation, during which the speaker observes—not, *All men are liars*, thus bringing an untenable charge against the Saints of God, but—*All mankind is untrustworthy*, that is, “all flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field,” all men are fleeting, unstable, vanishing like a dream, and therefore there is none save God on whom we can place reliance. Wherefore the Apostle saith, “Let God be true, but every man a liar;” and therefore too, as the Prophet said long before him, “The Gentiles shall come unto Thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.” And as the favourite explanation of the Psalm with the Latins is that it denotes the constancy of the Martyrs, who believed, and spoke boldly in the Name of CHRIST, so they take this clause to be a confession on the part of each Martyr of his own frailty and liability to fall, confessing that in as far as he is man, he too may be false to his LORD, and give way under torment, but that if he conquer, it is God’s victory and might, not his own, which has overcome the enemy.

11 What reward shall I give unto the LORD : for all the benefits that he hath done unto me?

12 I will receive the cup of salvation : and call upon the Name of the LORD.

Origen.  
S. Chrysost.  
A.  
S. Hieron.  
&c.  
S. Matt. xx.  
23.

Ver. 15.  
R. David.  
R. Kimchi.

The Greek and Latin Fathers, with singular unanimity, understand by the Cup here mentioned as the one act of gratitude to God for all His benefits, the chalice of suffering and martyrdom, whereof the LORD JESUS spake to the sons of Zebedee, “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?” because nothing less than blood for Blood, our own life in repayment for the life which CHRIST gave up on the Cross for us, appears in any degree an adequate acknowledgment of His unspeakable goodness. *I will receive* (Heb. *lift up*) *the cup of salvation*. The direct reference is to the cup of wine used in the benediction at the Paschal meal (a rite not named in the Old Testament, but introduced amongst the Jews between the Captivity and the destruction of the Temple), and thus denotes a promise on the part of the Psalmist, to observe the Passover with true devotion, just as a little later he pledges himself to “offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving.” Of this “cup of blessing” the Rabbins say, in explanation of this passage, “I will elevate the chalice of



salvation; that is, when I keep festival and rejoicings, I will lift up a cup of wine, I will give thanks to Him over it in the presence of many, and will make mention of the salvation wherewith He saved me. And this he calls the chalice of salvation." To us, the words have an especial force, remembering that this Psalm was part of the Hallel sung by CHRIST and the Apostles on the night of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, when He gave them the Cup of Salvation in His Blood; whence this Psalm is used in the West on Maundy Thursday and Corpus Christi as well as on Festivals of Martyrs. The two ideas blend in one, as we recognize in that commemoration of the LORD's dying the source of the valorous daring of His Saints, ready to press after Him through the Red Sea of Martyrdom. Therefore, one who was himself eminent amongst the Martyrs, says of his true yoke-fellows, "Believing that they daily drink the Blood of CHRIST's chalice, that they too may be able to shed their blood for CHRIST's sake." And, as another Saint observes, "The holy Martyrs glowed with this spiritual wine of the HOLY GHOST, when casting away and throwing behind them all the seductions of the world, they went to their passions, forgetting goods and affections, inheritance and marriage, and overcoming the very love of their infant pledges aimed against them with weeping and casting of dust on the head, and that of the mother rending her face and tearing her hair. But they, like men intoxicated, saw not all this, nor recognized their own kindred, because having the HOLY GHOST poured into their hearts, they hastened to execution, as though to comforts and rewards."

Hugo Card.  
D. C.  
Titelman.

S. Cyprian.  
Ep. 56.

S. August.  
Serm. de  
Tempore.  
185.

At the Lamb's high feast we sing  
Praise to our victorious King,  
Who hath washed us in the tide  
Flowing from His pierced side.

Brev. Rom.  
The Hymn,  
*Ad regias*  
*Agni dapes,*  
for Easter-  
tide.

Praise we Him Whose love Divine  
Gives His sacred Blood for Wine,  
Gives His Body for the Feast,  
CHRIST the Victim, CHRIST the Priest.

Where the Paschal Blood is poured,  
Death's dark angel sheathes his sword;  
Israel's hosts triumphant go  
Through the wave that drowns the foe.

And in this sense the meaning given to the passage by modern critics holds good, that the best way of showing gratitude to GOD is to accept in humble thankfulness the blessings He bestows, chief amongst which is this most holy Sacrament of His love. Wherefore this verse is appointed in the Latin Church to be recited by the Priest before he communicates himself with the chalice at Mass. So runs another hymn:

Missale  
Rom.



The Hymn,  
*R/ps, dulcis  
anima.*

He who ever fully loves  
Whereas He is present,  
He Whose friendship always proves  
Of all gifts most pleasant :

He with thee would gladly rest,  
In thy heart remaining,  
Fain would sit with Thee as guest,  
There His food obtaining.

Arise, for He is very near,  
And swiftly run to meet Him,  
And let thy heart be pure and clear,  
That it may fitly greet Him.

Liturg. S.  
Clement.

Pseudo-  
Hieron.  
Act. S. Lau-  
rent.

*And call upon the Name of the Lord.* So, in one of the most ancient liturgies of the Church, at the elevation of the Divine Mysteries, the people responded when the Priest had exclaimed, "Holy things for holy persons," with the cry, "One Holy, One LORD, One JESUS CHRIST to the glory of GOD the FATHER, blessed for evermore. Amen. Glory be to GOD in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will. Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed be He that cometh in the Name of the LORD: GOD is the LORD, and He hath appeared unto us. Hosanna in the highest." And the Martyrs too, when about to drink of that other cup of His, invoked Him to be their strength, as S. Laurence cried, "LORD JESU CHRIST, GOD of GOD, have mercy on me Thy servant."

13 I will pay my vows now in the presence of all his people : right dear in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

De Muls.

Bellarmino.

1 S. Pet. 1.  
18.

Deiltzsch.

Apost.  
Const.

The literal sense here is a public thanksgiving for deliverance, and the meaning of the latter clause is that GOD holds His Saints far too dear to expose them lightly to death, but that He jealously guards them from harm. Those who interpret the whole Psalm of the Martyrs, understand this verse as a promise on their part to confess CHRIST openly before all men ; not secretly, but where the act may bring with it the cup of martyrdom ; knowing that their voluntary oblation, permitted by GOD, is a glorious and precious jewel in His sight ; *precious*, because they are "not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious Blood of CHRIST." And it is recorded of S. Babylas, the great Bishop of Antioch, who attained his crown in the Decian persecution, that he recited these words as he went to the place of his passion. They are also appointed by the Apostolical Constitutions to be used at Christian funerals, and they are recited as a versicle and response at the end of the Martyr-



ology in the conventual office of Chapter. S. Basil the Great S. Basil. M. dwells on them as enforcing the lesson of the sacredness of those bodies which had been the temples of the HOLY GHOST, observing that whereas, under the Law, any who touched a dead body was held unclean; under the Gospel contact with the relics of a Martyr is counted a blessing and privilege.

The words may further be explained of the Baptismal vows, which include proceeding to reception of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar; and then of enduring all troubles and trials to the very end of life; nay, if need be, at the cost of it; and finally, of faithful acquittal of all pledges made by any of us to the LORD, remembering those words of the Wise Man, "When thou vowest a vow to God, defer L. not to pay it; for He hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." And by imitating the Saints of God, even without winning the glory of martyrdom, we may die to the world, a precious thing, and bountifully paid by God, to Whom we may say, as we vow this daily death, "Thy servant will go a little way over D. C. Jordan with the King; and why should the King recompense it me with so great a reward?" Eccl. v. 4. L. 2 Sam. xix. 36.

14 Behold, O LORD, how that I am thy servant: I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid; thou hast broken my bonds in sunder.

There is no pride in the Martyr's vow, as he offers himself in sacrifice to God; for he acknowledges it to be but the debt of his bondage to Him; and according to the LORD's own precept, when he hath done all things commanded him, he confesses that he is an unprofitable servant. The humility is great, but the dignity is greater, to be the servant of God, a title wherewith Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Paul, and even the Master of them all, was styled, instead of being the servant of sin. He calls himself servant twice, in delight at the name, having no shame, but rather exultation in it; he repeats it twice, because he has given himself to God's service first in belief and then in good works; and styles himself the *son of His handmaid*, as one born in His house and service, never having had independent rights from the first moment of existence, but yet closer and dearer to his LORD from that long familiarity. It is said *handmaid*, not *servant*, because where slavery exists, the child follows the status of the mother, and a noble father does not cause the child of a bondswoman to be born free. There is, further, a special fitness in the title as given to Him Who had no earthly father, but Whose Virgin Mother styled herself "the handmaid of the LORD;" while all Christians may call the Church, bought with their LORD's Blood, their Mother, Bellarmino. Pseudo-Hieron. R. Shelomo. S. Luke i. 38.



and Religious can apply the title to the particular Order in which they have vowed themselves to God. And in each of these latter cases there are certain attributes of a good handmaid which should be found in a pure Church or a zealous community. A handmaid should be lowly in conversation, active in work, steadfast in patience, ready in service, fruitful in gain, notable in saving; and the son of such a handmaid should possess his mother's attributes. *Thou hast broken my bonds in sunder.* All may say it of the effect of justifying

Hugo Card. grace in loosing us from the fetters of sin, Religious may take it of the snapping of those ties which bound them to secular life, and the Martyrs of that rending asunder of their mortal bodies which set free the soul to wing its way to CHRIST, Whose yoke is easy, Whose burden is light, Whose service is perfect freedom.

15 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving :  
and will call upon the Name of the LORD.

Lev. vii. 12. This is, in the literal sense, a promise to make the Levitical thank-offering of fine flour, which answers to the festival cup named earlier in the Psalm, and represents for us the remaining species of the Eucharistic Oblation; whence this Psalm, from verse 10 to the end, is one of those appointed to be recited by Priests of the Western Church before saying Mass. But the early commentators prefer to understand it still of the complete surrender of body and soul to God in one final act of self-dedication, especially martyrdom (a sense in which many of those who themselves sealed their faith with their blood have taken it,) and then of the continual praise in heaven which follows such devotion upon earth; and S. Ambrose dwells on the future tense here, *I will sacrifice*, as implying so much, because there can be no perfect praise and thanksgiving offered to God on earth. Observe too, that as so often in the Psalter, the mystery of the Holy Trinity is here veiled, by a threefold invocation of the Most High, as the words *I will call upon the Name of the Lord* have twice before occurred in the course of this Psalm, a point lost by the division followed in LXX. and Vulgate.

16 I will pay my vows unto the LORD, in the sight  
of all his people : in the courts of the LORD's house,  
even in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise the  
LORD.

Hugo Card. There is some little variance here as to whether the verse is to be understood of the Church Militant, with its various local Churches, which are its *courts*, in the midst of that peaceful vision wherein the Bride looks for and to her Spouse, or whether (and far more beautifully) we should



take it of the Martyr, who has already paid his vows on earth in the presence of a multitude, and is now declaring that he will again, on the last Great Day, in the sight of all men and Angels, renew his faithful vows to the LORD, and be lifted up as a choice, precious and lively stone, to be compacted into the walls of the wide courts of that building made without hands, eternal in the heavens; and that in no obscure or lowly place of glory, but *in the midst* of the Heavenly City, where the Beatific Vision is its light and glory for ever, where our *Miserere* will be turned into an endless *Alleluia*.

Honorius.  
Pseudo-  
Hieron.

Wherefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, Who is gracious, righteous, and merciful; glory be to the SON, from Whom we receive the Cup of Salvation; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Who hath broken our bonds in sunder.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

O LORD, washer away of sins, Who quickly comfortest the soul that faithfully calleth on Thee, we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst deliver us from the peril of hell, and doing away with the death of sin, restore us to the land of the living. (1.)

Let the life of Thy humble servants, O LORD, be as precious in Thy sight as is the death of Thy Saints, that loosed from the bonds of sin, we may attain a foretaste of the joys of Jerusalem to come. (1.)

O most merciful and righteous LORD, deliver our souls from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from falling, and keep Thy gentleness for us in both respects, that if we be chastised by Thy justice, we may be guarded by Thy mercy. (11.)

What can Thy creature, O LORD, repay Thee for the benefits of redemption which Thou hast bestowed upon him, who feeleth that he hath escaped the sentence of death by receiving the Cup of Salvation, solely that he may pay his vows unto Thee for Thy faithful redemption, and offer Thee loyal service in the courts of the house of GOD, when the deeds of darkness have been destroyed? Grant us soundness, O LORD, that breaking the bonds of our sins, we may do the work that pleaseth Thee, and in the midst of Jerusalem offer Thee an acceptable sacrifice in Thy praise, to the end that they whom the excitement of their mind makes to be liars may be brought in safety to behold Thee, by the truth of the Catholic belief. (11.)

O GOD of heaven and earth, graciously hearken to the voice of the prayer of them that love Thee, incline the ear of Thy mercy to the petitions of them that call upon Thee,

D.C.



- deliver us from all trouble and sorrow, and when we pass away from this life, give us life everlasting. (1.)
- D. C. O LORD, receive the prayers of Thy people which believeth in Thee, and grant that we may ever offer Thee the sacrifice of praise; break asunder the bonds of our sins, that we may worthily pay Thee the vows of Christian faith. (1.)

## PSALM CXVII.

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

## ARGUMENT.

ABG. THOMAS. That CHRIST, by the Coming of the HOLY GHOST, hath stablished His mercy upon us. The Voice of the Apostles to the Gentiles. The Voice of the Apostles, inviting all the Gentiles to praise the LORD with belief of heart and confession of mouth. A speech of the Prophet concerning His praise.

VEN. BEDÆ. There are but two verses, but nevertheless the full honour of a title is prefixed, that we may understand that words, however few, in praise of the LORD are always most full.

And we should apply this Psalm also to the person of the Martyrs, who now having as it were achieved their glorious passion, arouse all nations to the praises of the LORD; Who hath done such things for His servants, that they may the rather be imbued with His example.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. It is spoken of the company of Ananias when they came out of the furnace. It also foretells the calling of the Gentiles by the preaching of the Gospel.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA. The calling of the Gentiles.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm uttering praise.

## VARIOUS USES.

*Gregorian.* Monday: Vespers. [Easter Eve: Vespers. Festivals of our LORD and of Apostles: I. Vespers. Ascension: I. and II. Vespers.]

*Monastic.* Monday: Vespers. [Easter Eve: Vespers.]

*Ambrosian.* Monday: Vespers.

*Parisian.* Saturday: Lauds.

*Lyons.* Monday: Vespers.

*Quignon.* Saturday: Lauds.

*Eastern Church.* Daily: Vespers.

## ANTIPHONS.

*Gregorian.* Praise \* the LORD, all ye nations.

*Monastic.* As preceding Psalm.

*Ambrosian.* The truth of the LORD \* endureth for ever.



*Parisian.* Praise the LORD, \* all ye peoples, for His merciful kindness is established upon us.

*Lyons.* As *Gregorian.*

*Mozarabic.* Stablish Thy mercy upon us, O LORD.

1 O praise the LORD, all ye heathen : praise him,  
all ye nations.

The Rabbinical interpretation of the Psalm is completely R. David. in accord with the Christian view, inasmuch as it is taken to be a prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles in the days of Messiah; for, as a famous Rabbi comments, "This Psalm consists of but two verses, and belongs to the days of Messiah. And by making it consist of only two verses, the Psalmist implies that all nations shall be put into two classes: Israel, who will abide in their own Law, and the Gentiles under a separate division, in the seven precepts, and both together shall worship Jahveh." It is very noteworthy that this opinion recognizes that the conversion of the Gentiles to the true faith will be unattended by any obligation to the ceremonial law, for the "seven precepts" referred to are those alleged by Talmudists to have been laid down by the sons of Noah as a guide for their posterity, and are as follows: To be righteous in judgment, to praise God, to refrain from worshipping idols, to avoid incest, to shed no blood, to commit no robbery, and to maim no living animal. Cocceius. With this distinction of Jew and Gentile the two words employed in the verse seem to accord, as the former of the two, **יְהוָה**, is that always used in Scripture of the idolatrous Gentile heathens, while the second, **יְהוָה**, strictly "children of one mother," can be used to denote the twelve tribes of Israel, each, in a sense, a separate nation, a distinction made by the Apostle in reference to the similar wording of Ps. ii. 1. They draw attention also to the different words employed to express the worship paid by each of these classes, De Mula. as implying a further shade of distinction, for **הַלְלוּ**, *hallelu*, the word of especial rejoicing in the LORD, and of liturgical praise in Divine worship, is that ascribed to the Gentiles, as having peculiar reason for gladness in being brought out of misery and darkness into the Gospel of light, (a meaning much enforced by the great prominence of the word *Alleluia* in the rites of the Catholic Church), while the less exultant phrase **שִׁבְחֵהוּ**, implying simple acknowledgment of merit and goodness in any person or thing, is assigned to the Jews, who up to the present time deny the mission and holiness of CHRIST, Whom they will at last confess and adore. And thus, as the Gentiles form the more numerous and more zealous portion of the Church, they are placed before the Jews in the order of the verse. The Christian explanation Agellius. S. Bruno Carth. Acts iv. 27. Genebrardus. Cocceius.

L.  
Où.



Rom. xv. 11. of the Psalm is Apostolic, for S. Paul cites this verse when arguing for the union of Jews and Gentiles in one Church, prefacing his quotation with a gloss on the following verse, and an old commentator bids us note that the first part of the injunction began to be fulfilled when the Wise Men came with their gifts to Bethlehem, and the latter when the trilingual inscription, proclaiming the Kingship of the LORD, was set up over His Cross. It is fulfilled continually by three classes of worshippers: devout pilgrims here on earth, the faithful departed who are being purified in the middle state, and by the blessed in heaven, all of whom join in the chorus of praise to God.

Pseudo-Hieron.

Ay.

2 For his merciful kindness is ever more and more towards us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise the LORD.

Agellius. The Rabbins, dwelling on the word *us*, argue that while the former verse embraces both Jews and Gentiles, this one can refer only to Israel; and it is true that such is the primary sense, for S. Paul, in his comment on the Psalm, observes: "Now I say that JESUS CHRIST was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers." But he goes on to show that the Psalmist used the word *us* in a wider and more loving sense, identifying Jews and Gentiles as one new people, for it continues: "And that the Gentiles should glorify God for His mercy." *Is more and more to us.* The LXX. read, *hath been strengthened*, the Vulgate, is confirmed. But the Hebrew

Rom. xv. 8.

Gen. vii. 18  
—20.

Tit. iii. 5.

Gen. vii. 20.

Ps. xxxvi. 5.

Ps. ciii. 11.

C.

*נִצַּח* is much more than this. It means *to prevail like a flood above us*, and is the word used thrice in this sense to describe the force of the Deluge. It is not then the mere strength, but the unbounded vastness of God's mercy which the Psalmist would fain describe, poured out in such abundance upon the Gentiles as to overwhelm them in a fathomless deep, covering all their sins, and all their good works, and leaving nothing visible save the mercy of God; for "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." "Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered" in the Flood of old, but the mercy of God prevails not by cubits, ten or fifteen, above us, but overwhelms us with its measureless height, for "Thy mercy, O LORD, reacheth unto the heavens, and Thy faithfulness unto the clouds;" filling the whole space which lies between earth and heaven, and inundating it with a deluge of loving-kindness. "For look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth; so great is His mercy also toward them that fear Him."

*And the truth of the Lord endureth for ever.* That Truth is the Eternal Word, Who in His incarnate form said, "I



am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." And that the Jews in His day had arrived at the knowledge of the eternity of Messiah, appears from their own saying to Him; "We have heard out of the Law that CHRIST abideth for ever." That truth, too, which came by JESUS CHRIST, that Gospel which is the substance of the shadowy Law, endureth for ever, for He hath said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." And the mercy which began in His Incarnation, was confirmed in His Passion, when He said, "It is finished," for then the gates of Eden were again thrown open, and the fiery sword of the cherubim withdrawn. It is further to be observed that the Apostle, when saying that the Gentiles are to praise God for His mercy, and that *truth* belongs to the Jews, because God confirmed for them the promises made to the fathers, does not mean that the Jews have no part in that mercy, but that mercy alone is shown to the Gentiles, to whom God had made no promises whatever; whereas, in sending the Messiah to the Jews, according to His promise, He gave them both truth and mercy, for the promises were not due to any merits of their own, but solely to the clemency of the LORD. His mercy and truth will endure for ever in yet another sense, in the abiding results of His final sentence at the Last Day, when He will save or condemn according to the deservings of those who stand at His judgment seat. Then, when the Church is finally united, will the symbolism of this Psalm with its two verses be made clear, as the building rises with its double wall, cemented by the two Testaments, clamped with the twin precepts of love to God and to one's neighbour. And the four strophes of which the two verses consist, denote the quadruple cardinal virtues, drawn from the fourfold stream of the Gospels, which shall adorn the Saints who assemble in Jerusalem to praise the LORD.

And therefore:

Glory be to the FATHER, the LORD GOD; glory be to the SON, Who maketh Jews and Gentiles praise Him in one Church; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, Whose merciful kindness floodeth our souls.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

#### COLLECTS.

O most Almighty LORD GOD, Who art praised by the mouth of all nations, we beseech Thee to enlarge our soul with Thy truth, and to confirm Thy mercy upon us. (1.)

Confirm Thy mercy upon us, O LORD, that with all nations we may praise Thee in Thine own presence for evermore, and saved by Thy truth, may alway abide with Thee in Thine eternal Kingdom. (11.)

O LORD, the FATHER Almighty, cause us ever to offer

S. John xiv.

D. C.

S. John xii.

34.

Z.

S. Matt.

xxiv. 35.

Hugo Card.

Bellarmino.

Pseudo-

Hieron.

Honorius.



fitting praise unto Thy majesty, confirm Thy mercy upon us, lest any taint of sin should corrupt our soul, that Thy Truth, Consubstantial with Thee, may abide with us for ever. (5.)

## PSALM CXVIII.

TITLE. LXX. and Vulgate: Alleluia.

### ARGUMENT.

ARG. THOMAS. That CHRIST is the Corner-stone and the Day of our illumination. That man may be shown the Way, that is, CHRIST, the gate whereby there is entrance, which cannot be shut, The Voice of CHRIST speaking of Himself, and throwing open the way to man, entering on which he may reach the gate, passing through which he will utter Alleluia to the LORD, that is, the praise of heart, voice, and righteous deed. The Voice of the Prophet concerning persecution. The Voice of CHRIST against the Jews. The Voice of the Apostles to the Gentiles. Of the trouble of the enemies.

VEN. BEDE. This Psalm closes its four first verses with a similar ending, as counselling in fourfold exhortation that the whole world ought to give praise to the One GOD in the Gospel number. The faithful people, loosed from the chains of sin, makes a general exhortation in the first section that all should give thanks unto the LORD; because it has found, from being heard in trouble, that man need not be feared: *O give thanks unto the Lord*. Secondly, it saith that trust should be placed in the LORD only; by Whom the people is shown to have escaped the hostility of the Gentiles, and to have attained the medicine of the truest life: *It is better to trust in the Lord*. Thirdly, it saith that the gates of righteousness are to be opened for it; adding further concerning the Corner-stone, that is, the LORD the SAVIOUR: *Open me the gates of righteousness*. Fourthly, it urges on other Christians the duty of frequenting the courts of the LORD, rejoicing with sweet delight in the coming of the Holy Incarnation: *Blessed be He that cometh in the Name of the Lord*.

SYRIAC PSALTER. Anonymous. It is literally spoken of Asaph the Recorder, and of the Priests ministering unto the LORD. It also prophesieth of the conquering warriors and of CHRIST.

EUSEBIUS OF CÆSARÆA. The Victory of them that fight in CHRIST, and a prophecy of CHRIST.

S. ATHANASIUS. A Psalm with confession; also, Betokening a ready mind together with song.

### VARIOUS USES.

Gregorian. Sunday: Prime. [Septuagesima to Easter. Sunday: Lauds.]

Monastic. Sunday: Lauds.

Ambrosian. Saturday: Lauds.



*Parisian.* } Sunday: Prime.  
*Lyons.* }  
*Quignon.* Wednesday: Prime.

## ANTIPHONS.

*Parisian.* With my whole heart \* have I sought Thee, O LORD,  
O teach me Thy statutes.

*Mozarabic.* The LORD is my strength, and my song, and is become my salvation.

This Psalm, from internal evidence, is certainly one of the Post-Captivity series, composed for some festival of the highest importance. There are at least four occasions to which it appears suitable, but two of them take rank above the others in probability, namely, the Dedication of the Second Temple (Ezra vi. 15, 18) and the first great Feast of Tabernacles held in the new Temple after its consecration (Neh. viii. 13—18.) The two other views put forward by modern critics, that the Psalm refers to the erection of the altar, and the Feast of Tabernacles kept then (Ezra iii. 1—4,) or else to the laying of the foundation-stone of the new building (Ezra iii. 8—13,) are both quite untenable in the face of expressions which clearly imply the completion of the restored erection, whose gates, corner-stone, altar, and whole circuit are directly named in successive verses. On the whole, the balance of evidence is in favour of the Feast of Tabernacles recorded in Nehemiah viii. 13. In the first place, as already mentioned under Ps. lxxxi. 3, when we find "*the feast*" mentioned by itself with no further detail, it always means that of Tabernacles, the greatest holiday of the Law; which accords with the phrase, "*This is the day,*" in verse 24. Secondly, we know as a fact that this Psalm was actually used upon that festival in the ritual of the Second Temple, though the modern Jewish use of it, as part of the Hallel, upon every great feast and on the New Moons, prevents this argument from being conclusive. Thirdly, the mention of tents or "*tabernacles*" in verse 15 may very probably have reference to the booths made by the people to keep that feast in, for the first time since the days of Joshua, whereupon, "*there was very great gladness,*" (Neh. viii. 17,) a phrase incidentally agreeing with the same connection of ideas in the Psalm. But it must be allowed that there are isolated passages in the course of the poem which severally favour the views which place it earlier than the completion of the Temple, albeit the entire scope is subversive of them, and there is thus no improbability in an ingenious suggestion that the Psalm grew with the Temple itself, and that we have it now in the final shape it took after successive recastings to fit it for use at each stage of the restoration. It has been in use as a Sunday Psalm in the Western Church, with special reference to the weekly commemoration of Easter, from a very remote time, a view foreshadowed by the Rabbinical application of it to Messiah, as testified by R.R. Shelomo and Kimchi.

1 O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is gracious :  
because his mercy endureth for ever.



2 Let Israel now confess, that he is gracious : and that his mercy endureth for ever.

3 Let the house of Aaron now confess : that his mercy endureth for ever.

4 Yea, let them now that fear the LORD confess : that his mercy endureth for ever.

C.

We read in the Revelation of the Apostle John that a great multitude sings Alleluia in heaven, which the four living creatures also and the four-and-twenty elders utter as they worship the LORD, which the whole of that host of heaven joins in singing with melodious gladness to the sound of the clear-toned trumpet. Wherefore let us too haste with eagerness to this duty of praise. For if we sing with a pure heart, we join with those saintly powers in their loving devotion, and that which we know to make the bliss of heavenly beings becomes the honour and grace of earthly ones. Wherefore let us gaze on this Psalm shining with its beauteous opening, for at the very beginning it terminates four verses with the same ending, to teach us by this fourfold exhortation that the whole world ought to praise the one God with the Gospel number. The Psalm is wrought with a texture of glowing colours, setting the Four Gospels at its head in the four similar verses. And as the High Priest's vesture shone, wrought with threads of gold and variegated needlework, having bells upon the hem, so this Psalm, composed with beautiful variety, contains in its beginning, in its end, and scattered throughout it in diverse places with harmonious words, the praise of CHRIST our true High Priest, and sounds like a cymbal with its golden bells. The same persons are invited to unite in the strains of praise as were enjoined in a previous Psalm to trust in the LORD as their help and shield; first of all, the whole Hebrew nation; secondly, the chiefs of the national religion; thirdly, the believing Gentiles. And thus we are taught the progress of the Christian Church, when it began with the twelve Apostles, when, a little after the LORD's Resurrection, "a great company of the priests were obedient unto the Faith," when, finally, the multitudes of the Gentiles were brought into the fold.

Honorius.

Bellarmino.

Ps. cxv. 9—  
11.

Acts vi. 7.

L.

Jer. xxxiii.  
10.

In the first purport of the Psalm, as celebrating the worship of God in the revived Temple, it is the precise fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy: "Thus saith the LORD, Again there shall be heard in this place, which ye say shall be desolate without man and without beast, even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast, the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness; the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride; the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD is good; for His mercy endureth for ever: and of them that shall bring the



sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD." And the strain began when the builders under Ezra laid the foundations of the house of the LORD, when the priests with trumpets and the Levites with cymbals revived the ancient ceremonial appointed by David, as they were imitating the memorable event of his translation of the Ark to Jerusalem out of a Philistine household. Ezra III. 10.  
1 Chron. xvi. 34.

The double meaning of the LXX. and Vulgate word *confess*, (which has been here employed by the Prayer Book to represent a different word, *say*.) as denoting acknowledgment of sin as well as ascription of praise, is dwelt on by more than one commentator, though they agree that jubilant praise is the chief intention in this case. And they remind us that the reason for praise is of the briefest, that *the Lord is good*, for "none is good, but one, that is, God," and that He does not limit this attribute to Himself in His essence, but diffuses it at all times and everywhere, *because His mercy endureth for ever*. Let us therefore now, in the time of grace, in the full knowledge of the Incarnation, praise Him for that His mercy, Who came to our rescue, and Who abideth LORD and King for evermore. A.  
Hugo Card.  
  
S. Mark x.  
18.  
  
D. C.

5 I called upon the LORD in trouble : and the LORD heard me at large.

All the old versions except the Syriac have missed the force of contrast in the Hebrew wording of this verse, where *strait* or *narrowness* (exactly the Greek στενοχωρία and Latin *angustia*) is the word for *trouble*, answering to the *large place* (A.V.) πλατυσμός, *latitudine*, of the second strophe. The primary notion is that of passing through a narrow defile into a wide plain, and it is not impossible that there may have been a blending of literalism and symbolism intended here at the first use of the Psalm, in procession to the new Temple, as the line of worshippers emerged from the close streets of the city into the open square in front of the building ; no unfit emblem of their passage from the restraints of captivity into the recovered freedom of their own land.

The verse is then taken in threefold reference to CHRIST, to the Church, and to the faithful soul. The LORD JESUS called upon His FATHER in the Agony of the Garden, in the Passion of the Cross, in the narrow prison of the grave, and the FATHER heard Him in the wide place of Heaven, setting Him free in the Resurrection, exalting Him in the Ascension. The Church, too, calling upon the LORD out of the narrow limits of that cradle of the Faith, the upper chamber in Jerusalem, was made to extend far and wide over the face of the earth, and was brought safely through the sore straits of the ten persecutions into the full enjoyment of liberty and peace. And, finally, the soul, after much suffering and D. C.  
  
Le Blanc.  
  
Bellarmine.



L. trial, is brought by God into that "exceeding broad com-  
 Ps. cxix. 96. mandment" which is the knowledge of Divine love; is brought  
 Haymo. out of the narrow scope and petty details of earthly things  
 C. into the boundless expanse of heavenly contemplation.

6 The LORD is on my side : I will not fear what  
 man doeth unto me.

7 The LORD taketh my part with them that help  
 me : therefore shall I see my desire upon mine  
 enemies.

S. Chrysost. The Psalmist, in the former of these verses, contrasts the  
 mighty aid of God with the feeble assault of men, to show  
 his just ground of confidence. Yet he does not therefore  
 say, *I shall not suffer*, but, *I will not fear*. Suffering he  
 may have in abundance, but the saying of the LORD JESUS  
 S. Matt. x. is in his ears, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are  
 28. not able to kill the soul." And it is added, *The Lord taketh*  
 Agellius. *my part with them that help me*, as showing, that although  
 He alone is our true defence and shield, making all other  
 allies superfluous, yet it is His pleasure to work as it were  
 unseen, and with instruments, often compelling the bitterest  
 Cocceius. foes of His Church to do her work in the very act of endeav-  
 ouring to subvert her; just as the very hatred of the Jews  
 forced Christians out of the position of a subordinate school  
 of Hebrew thought into an independent creed, loosed from  
 the veil and yoke of the Law, and capable of conquering the  
 Empire, a result mainly contributed to by the Pagan sub-  
 version of the Jewish polity and worship. So one of the  
 last champions of classical heathenism, in the days of its  
 miserable death-bed under Honorius, complains :

Rutilius.

Atque utinam nunquam Judæa subacta fuisset  
 Pompeii bellis, imperiove Titi!  
 Latius excisæ pestis contagia serpunt,  
 Victoresque suos natio victa premit.

And would that Jewry had not been in war  
 By Pompey conquered, or by Titus ruled,  
 The taint of that slain plague now creeps more far,  
 The vanquished nation hath its masters schooled.

L. So that in truth, the Martyrs and Confessors, thus overcom-  
 S. Albertus ing by endurance, saw their *desire upon their enemies* in their  
 Magnus. conversion, as their LORD had seen His victory over the foes  
 of mankind, as every steadfast Christian resists still the sons  
 of wickedness, saying to himself in every time of need,  
 Isa. li. 12. "Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that  
 shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass,  
 and forgettest the LORD thy Maker?" The Vulgate trans-  
 lates, not incorrectly, *I shall look down upon mine enemies*,



as the LORD did first from the Cross, and then from the height of heaven, converting the thief from the one watch-tower, and the persecutor Saul of Tarsus from the other. The enemies on whom we, lifted up on the Rock, have to look down, are the world, the flesh, and the devil; despising the first for its vanity, the second for its vileness, the third for his malice. And we may also include all our ghostly foes under this head, for the Church has to fight not only against man, "against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Hugo Card.  
A.  
Eph. vi. 12.

8 It is better to trust in the LORD : than to put any confidence in man.

9 It is better to trust in the LORD : than to put any confidence in princes.

The history of the court intrigues which hampered for so long a time the execution of the edict of Cyrus, a dead letter during the whole period of the reigns of Cambyzes and Smerdis the Magian, and not really carried out till the sixth year of Darius Hystaspes, a delay of full twenty years, obviously explains the allusion in the text. They take the counsel, besides its literal meaning, as a warning to man not to trust in his own free-will and powers for good, nor even in the *princes* of God's Church, the saints and angels, but in God alone; for, as one who is himself ranked amongst the Saints comments, however valuable their prayers may be to us, there is this one fact to be borne in mind, that God can help us without them, but they cannot be of the least help to us without God. Arnobius.  
A.  
S. Bruno  
Carth.

10 All nations compassed me round about : but in the Name of the LORD will I destroy them.

11 They kept me in on every side, they kept me in, I say, on every side : but in the Name of the LORD will I destroy them.

12 They came about me like bees, and are extinct even as the fire among the thorns : for in the Name of the LORD I will destroy them.

Once again, there is a direct historical reference here to the coalition against Israel in the earliest days of the return, which issued in the counter-decree of Artaxerxes, forbidding the erection of the Temple; and to the final victory over this opposition, won by the faith and perseverance of the Jews. The words are applied also to the conspiracy against the LORD JESUS, and then to the persecutions endured by Ezra iv. 4, 9,  
31  
A.  
C.



His Body the Church. The Gentiles, in the persons of Herod, Pilate, and the Roman soldiers, encompassed Him; the Jews too buzzed around Him with their angry murmurs, and blazed up against Him with their fierce but short-lived rage: and in the very act of stinging Him, the bees made His honey spread all over the world. The LXX. and the text which S. Augustine had before him read here, *As the bees the honeycomb*, so that the angry Jews, toiling in their anger around the LORD, were but making Him, by His Passion, sweeter and dearer to all His Saints, and they did but perish themselves, leaving their stings behind them.

L. Further, their malice, while it raged against His mortal body, destroying it, as fire does the *thorns*, left the Root of Jesse still uninjured, to spring up again with the green foliage and fragrant blossoms of the Rose of Sharon, in the glad spring-time of the Resurrection. So too, the persecutions which the Church suffered at the hands of the Pagans did but pour into the Saints the honey of virtue, making them sweeter and more fitting examples of imitation, while the flame kindled by their enemies consumed their faults and errors, utterly abolished by their valiant endurance of torture and death, sufferings most brief in duration, but rewarded with a blessed eternity. Applied to the soul, they remind us how our tempters, suggesting the idea of sweetness and enjoyment to us, leave behind them a deadly sting, while they are so far from conferring any real honey upon us that they strive to suck out of the flowers of our hearts all the sweetness of the HOLY SPIRIT, so as to leave us dry. Yet again, as the chief rage of bees is directed against any who approach the hive to obtain honey thence, so we read that when the Israelites attempted to enter the land that floweth with milk and honey, the Amorites came out against them, and chased them, "as bees do," and destroyed them; and in like manner our spiritual foes sally out and chase any of us whom they see bent on forcing our way into the true Land of Promise, flowing with that milk and honey which CHRIST gives His children for their food.

13 Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall :  
but the LORD was my help.

- Targum. This apostrophe to the enemies of Israel, here looked on as one person, is paraphrased by the Chaldee in reference to spiritual troubles, *My sin pressed me hard to overthrow me*. And the Carthusian reminds us how the LORD JESUS was dealt with in Nazareth, when "all they in the synagogue were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong; but He, passing through the midst of them, went His way," a type of His own Resurrection later and of the deliverance
- D. C.
- S. Luke iv. 28.
- Hugo Card.



He grants to His people when similarly beset; as He saved Peter when he was sinking in the waters, lifting him with His hand; and again, even more lovingly rescuing him from the fall of his soul after the threefold denial: "for a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again; but the wicked shall fall into mischief." Ay.  
Prov. xxiv. 16.

14 The LORD is my strength, and my song: and is become my salvation.

Who then are they that fall when they are thrust, save those who choose to be their own strength and song? No man falls in a struggle, save he whose strength and praise fall with him. Wherefore he whose strength and song is the LORD, can no more fall than the LORD Himself. A.

We may note in the use of these words, already familiar as part of the hymn of victory chanted by Moses at the Red Sea, and prophesied by Isaiah as to be heard again in the mouth of the chosen people, the feeling amongst the worshippers in the new Temple that the festival they were keeping was indeed "like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt." We may use the words for our own, because the LORD is our *strength*, in that it is in His might, not our own, that we conquer; He is our *song*, because we make Him the theme of our praise, and He suffers those of us who conquer to join in the song of Moses and the Lamb, and He is our *salvation*, our Jesus, Who hath ransomed us from destruction. And therefore it follows aptly: Exod. xv. 2.  
Isa. xli. 2.  
Isa. xi. 16.  
Honorius.  
Bellarmine.

15 The voice of joy and health is in the dwellings of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD bringeth mighty things to pass.

16 The right hand of the LORD hath the pre-eminence: the right hand of the LORD bringeth mighty things to pass.

For *health* and *dwellings*, we should read with the more exact and emphatic A.V., LXX., and Vulgate, *salvation* and *tabernacles*. It is most probable that we have here a reference to the great rejoicings at the Feast of Tabernacles held immediately upon the dedication of the second Temple, with a retrospective allusion to the passage of the Red Sea. The Church of God on earth is said to dwell in *tents*, as marking her condition of warfare, and also that the Saints "here have no continuing city, but seek one to come," and beset as they are on all sides by their enemies, yet their battle-cry evermore is, "In the Name of the LORD I will destroy them," and therefore the shout of victory, of joy, and of security goes up incessantly from the camp of the host of God. The world has its voice of *joy*, but not the voice of *salvation*, peni- Neh. viii. 17.  
S. Basil. M.  
Theodoret.  
Heb. xlii. 14.  
Ricard.  
Victoria.



- Hugo Card. tent sinners have the voice of salvation, but not the voice of joy ; but Saints made perfect have both together here in the way, and more fully when glorified in their Country. For what must be their joy in their country when they can be so glad even in a strange land? What their delight at home, who are thus cheerful in exile? What will they do in the peace of life everlasting, whose joy is thus abundant even in their pilgrimage? And the Greek Fathers, applying the verse especially to the Religious Life, and to the humble cells of the Laurus in the Thebaid, speak of the uniform cheerfulness of their monastic inmates, who acted up to the spirit of that precept of one of their own superiors, the Abbat Apollonius, who was wont to say, " We, by reason of salvation, ought not to be sad, seeing that we are to be heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Gentiles will be sad, Jews may weep, sinners mourn ; but the righteous shall be joyful. They who busy themselves with earthly thoughts in their mind rejoice in earthly things, but we, who have been accounted worthy of so great a hope, how should we not alway rejoice, seeing that the Apostle exhorts us to rejoice alway and to give thanks in all things?" In the threefold mention of the *right hand of the Lord* which follows, the mystery of the Holy Trinity is veiled. The right hand of the FATHER, mighty in creation, formed man in His own image, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. The right hand of the SON *exalted* (LXX. Vulg.) man, uniting mortality to Godhead, lifting man from the grave in the Resurrection, from the earth in the Ascension, so that Man hath now the *pre-eminence*, because He is the right hand of God. The right hand of the HOLY GHOST showered down abundant gifts of grace and power upon the Church in the day of Pentecost.
- Anon. Græc. ap. Cd. D. C.

17 I shall not die, but live : and declare the works of the LORD.

18 The LORD hath chastened and corrected me : but he hath not given me over unto death.

- Z. This is the voice of joy and health, the victorious shout from the camp of the righteous, going up in honour of the LORD's Resurrection, when, as we sing in Paschal-tide—

The Sequence,  
Victims  
Paschali.

Death and life, in wondrous strife,  
Came to conflict, sharp and sore,  
Life's Monarch, He that died, now dies no more.

- C. And then the words may be taken of His Martyrs also, dying cheerfully for Him, sure of a blessed arising, insomuch that the Church styles the anniversary of their passions not by the title of death, but of birthday, as denoting that they are born thereby into a happier life. All the persecutions which the Church endured, even when she seemed at the last gasp
- S. Bruno Carth.



of existence, were in vain to overthrow her, and she was merely purified, not destroyed, by suffering. It is not only illustrious Saints who may take these words upon their lips, but every faithful disciple of CHRIST, for He hath said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." *I will declare the works of the Lord.* It is the promise of the Church, that the more fiercely she is persecuted, the more will she spread abroad the news of the Gospel, the more boldly will she preach the Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Second Coming of CHRIST. It is the voice of the Martyrs, each of them declaring that his own endurance of torture and death for CHRIST's sake will be noised everywhere and recognized as the work of the LORD's might, not of man's weakness, and thus each of them, "being dead, yet speaketh." It is the voice of every ransomed sinner, calling to others, and saying, "O come hither, and hearken, all ye that fear God: and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul;" *for He hath not given me over unto death*, because "Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell, neither shalt Thou suffer Thy holy one"—holy in virtue of CHRIST our Righteousness—"to see corruption."

Genebrardus.

I S. John xi. 25.

Honorius.

C.

Ps. lxi. 14.

D. C.

Ps. xvi. 11.

19 Open me the gates of righteousness: that I may go into them, and give thanks unto the LORD.

20 This is the gate of the LORD: the righteous shall enter into it.

At this point in the Psalm, it would seem that the procession at last reaches the porch of the Temple, and calls to the warders to throw the gates open in order to allow its passage. Then a voice from within chants a response, warning the advancing throngs of the sacredness of the shrine they have reached, and the holiness which befits those who would fain enter its hallowed precincts. For us a more beautiful gate into a more holy shrine is open, as we seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, for we have "boldness to enter

Agellius.

C.

A.

L.

Heb. x. 19.

into the holiest by the Blood of JESUS, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His Flesh." And the LORD Himself bears witness to His Apostle, saying, "I am the Door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." This is the gate which the Church desires to be thrown open for her, and for the thronging crowds which come thither, by the preaching of the Apostles and other heralds of the Gospel, to whom the LORD hath committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And as the LORD JESUS Himself entered the gates of heaven by His Passion, so "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God," so that we may take these words as addressed by the

S. John x. 9.  
S. Athanasius.

Honorius.

Acts xiv. 22.



Martyrs to their executioners, beseeching them so to conform them to their Master's sufferings, that they may follow in His train, while the chorus of angels obedient to His command, *Open Me the gates of righteousness*, addresses the janitors of heaven: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in;" and not only the King, but His true followers, for it is written in another place, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." And we may note, that while the call from without is, "Open me the *gates*," the answer from within is, *This is the gate*, but one; one LORD, one faith, one baptism; for the numerous minor entrances, the twelve apostolic porches, all must be reached by one road only, and afford no separate and independent access into the courts of the LORD. So, when the unlearned ask that the Doctors of the Church may expound the Holy Scriptures, those gates of the LORD, to them, by opening their sense, the answer of a wise teacher will be, that they all converge to one entrance into the kingdom of heaven, the LORD JESUS; so again when the penitent ask for absolution from the Bishops and Priests of the Church, and desire to make confession to the LORD, they are warned that there is but one gate through which they can gain access, and that however various the ministers may be through whose agency they seek reconciliation, yet their confession is to GOD alone, and from GOD alone comes their absolution; wherefore, in the spirit of hope aroused by such a thought, this is one of the Psalms appointed by the Western Church in the office for the commendation of a departing soul, as though putting words into its mouth, wherewith encouraged, it may knock boldly at the gates of Paradise.

L.  
D. C.  
Ps. xxiv.

Isa. xxvi. 2.

C.

S. Albertus  
Magnus.

Hugo Card.

Rituale  
Roman.

21 I will thank thee, for thou hast heard me :  
and art become my salvation.

B. This is the devotion paid by him who has found the gate he sought, and has known that gate to be JESUS his SAVIOUR, Who heard at last the yearning prayers of His Saints, and by taking upon Him the nature of man in the Incarnation, became our salvation. Simeon departed in peace, having seen Him; and He said to His own disciples, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." And this unspeakable goodness of His is enforced for us by the phrase, *becamest my salvation*, which is more than *art my salvation*, or *gavest me salvation*, for it denotes that the Eternal, that He might save us, suffered change, and became what He was not, mortal and passible, that He might bestow on us grace and glory, and enable us to give thanks to Him

Ay.

S. Luke x.  
23.

Hugo Card.



in the heavenly Jerusalem, for having been our salvation Bellarmine. from sin and death.

22 The same stone which the builders refused : is become the head-stone in the corner.

23 This is the LORD's doing : and it is marvellous in our eyes.

We have no means of knowing if these verses refer to any historical event ; but more than one scholar has supposed that they may very possibly enshrine for us some such incident of the building of the second Temple on the foundations of the first, as that the workmen accidentally uncovered one of the stones, perhaps the very foundation stone, of Solomon's stately shrine, and were disposed to reject it, till overruled by the priests, who compelled them to set it up in the most honourable place, at the point of juncture of the two walls. But the old mystical interpretation of the passage by the Rabbins was that it refers to Messiah, although some of them, assuming the Psalm to speak of David, take him, as the prince who re-united Israel and Judah under one sceptre after having been for a time rejected by the former, to be the corner-stone intended, albeit the later date of Isaiah's prophecy disproves this view : " Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." For us no room for question remains, because the LORD JESUS has directly applied the verse to Himself, and to His rejection by the Chief Priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, saying to them : " Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner : this is the LORD's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes ? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken : but on whosoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the Chief Priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them," as indeed His chief Apostle expressly says that He did, when He, the Living stone, chosen of God, and precious, was disallowed of men, and " became a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient." He is the corner-stone for four reasons : He has joined God and Man together, two natures in His one Person ; He has united the Old and New Testaments ; He has blended Jews and Gentiles in one Catholic Church ; He links the Church Militant and Triumphant together in one Communion of Saints. *It is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes*, because that Stone was cut out without hands, was Very God and Very Man, conceived by the HOLY GHOST, and born of the Virgin Mary. Hence we sing of Him as " the sure foundation, and the pre-

R. Shelomo.  
R. Rashi.

isa. xxviii.  
16.

S. Matt.  
xxi. 42.

Acts iv. 11.

1 S. Pet. ii.  
4, 6.

P.

L.

C.  
S. Albertus  
Magnus.



The Hymn,  
*Angulare  
fundamen-  
tum.*  
Adam  
Victor.  
The Se-  
quence,  
*Ecce dies  
celebris.*

cious corner-stone" in the hymn of Dedication; and as Adam of S. Victor similarly sings:

Once refused, and once rejected,  
Now that stone hath been elected,  
As a trophy is erected,  
At the Temple's corner stands.

Slaying sin, but not our nature,  
He creates a newborn creature,  
Binds Himself the duplicature,  
Of the people with His bands.

24 This is the day which the LORD hath made :  
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Whether these words refer to the actual festival upon which the Psalm was originally sung, or to the "Day of salvation," the whole period of the wonderful restoration of Israel from exile, acknowledged in the previous verse to be the work of the LORD, Who had brought back His despised and suffering people to a place of honour and safety, after bringing utter destruction on its oppressor, Babylon, and saying of that proud city by the mouth of His Prophet, "They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations, but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the LORD;" at any rate there is no doubt as to the Christian application of the verse. From very early times, it has been held to apply not merely to the new time of grace, after the abolition of the Law, but in an especial manner to Easter Day, styled by S. Ignatius of Antioch, "Queen and chief of all the days." The verse in question is used as an anthem instead of the hymn at Lauds and Vespers from Easter Eve till Low Sunday in the Gregorian rite, and also as a response in the first Nocturn of the Circumcision, regarded as the Octave of the Nativity; while it was formerly employed in some Churches on the Feast of the Annunciation. Cardinal Bellarmine observes, that although the Angel's "good tidings of great joy" to the shepherds, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a SAVIOUR," would seem to justify the application of the verse to Christmas, yet as CHRIST's rejection was to follow His Nativity, and His place as the corner-stone was not openly appointed until after the Resurrection, we are bound to prefer the latter feast, which is thus celebrated as *the Day* in many a hymn of East and West alike: Thus the Golden Canon bursts into song:

S. John  
Damas.

Thou hallowed chosen morn of praise,  
That best and greatest shimest!  
Lady and Queen, and day of days,  
Of things divine, divinest,  
On Thee our praises CHRIST adore,  
For ever and for evermore.

Jer. li. 26.

A.

D. C.

S. Chrysost.

Ep. ad

Magnes. 9.

Brev. Rom.

Bellarmino.

S. Luke li.

11.

C.



Nor is the Western Church, as already observed, behind-hand in her exultation :

Hail thou day of days most glorious,  
Happy day, in CHRIST victorious,  
Day with gladness meritorious,  
First of days !

Adam  
Victorin.  
The Se-  
quence,  
*Salve dies  
dierum  
gloria.*

25 Help me now, O LORD : O LORD, send us now prosperity.

26 Blessed be he that cometh in the Name of the LORD :

As the LORD JESUS applied an earlier part of the Psalm to Himself, so here we find the welcoming plaudits addressed to Him by the multitudes during the Palm Sunday procession to Jerusalem. *Help me now* is the *Hosanna* cry, left untranslated amid the Greek of the New Testament, and the fact that both this festival and that of Easter fall on the first day of the week makes the song of gladness and the prayer for divine assistance equally suited to the Christian Sunday. In the Hebrew ritual, the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles was called the "Great Hosanna," and the name *hosannas* was even extended to the branches of trees, palm and myrtle, which were borne in the procession ; whence it would seem that over and above the notion of a triumphal march (perhaps borrowed by the Maccabees from Greek usage) which may have been entertained by the multitudes who escorted the LORD into Jerusalem, the other idea, that of rest in the Land of Promise, was even more directly present to their minds, as betokening their hopes from a King of the house of David Who should expel the Gentile oppressor, and cause Israel to sit once more in peace under the vines and fig-trees of Canaan. So we, in like manner, pray to Him first to save us, by delivering us from the tyranny of sin, and then to *send us prosperity*, by causing all our present evils to work together for good, and bring us into the perfect rest of heaven.

Bellarmino,

2 Mac. x. 7.

L.

S. Bruno  
Carth.

*Blessed be He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.*<sup>1</sup> And that in contrast to such as come in their own name, without any divine authorization, as CHRIST Himself said to the Jews, "I am come in My FATHER'S Name, and ye receive Me not ; s. John v. if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." <sup>43</sup>.

Honorius.

<sup>1</sup> The liturgical use of these words in the Mass is of remote antiquity. In the Liturgy of S. James, the congregation utters them in response to the Deacon's invitation to draw near the altar for communion. In that of S.

Clement, they form part of the anthem sung by the people immediately after the "Holy things for holy persons" has been uttered by the Priest at the elevation. In that of S. Chrysostom, the Priest uses the words much



**ANON. GRÆC.** It is very well said *Who cometh, not who came*, for He is always coming to those who need Him, always passing by unseen, always near, and ready to show Himself when we call. We have a further proof that this is the true collocation of the words from another saying of the Redeemer, "Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the LORD." Were it not for this, and for the express form of one cry of the multitude,

**S. LUKE XIX. 38.** "Blessed be He that cometh as King in the Name of the LORD;" we might follow the present Hebrew accents, and understand the words as a priestly benediction on the zealous worshippers who thronged to the Temple, reading the sentence, *Blessed in the Name of the Lord be he* (i.e. every one) *that cometh, [to worship Him here.]* And in fact there is

**MIDRASH.** Jewish authority for saying that this was the greeting given at Jerusalem to the caravans of pilgrims as they arrived to keep the great festivals: a sense which accords very well with the latter strophe of the verse:

we have wished you good luck, ye that are of the house of the LORD.

The Prayer Book version here (though agreeing with a gloss of S. Chrysostom) misses the plain meaning of the passage, which is correctly given by all the old versions, as well as by the A.V., *We have blessed you from the house of the Lord*, words spoken by the Priests and Levites standing on the threshold of the Temple to receive the procession of worshippers. And it is mystically explained of the ministry of the Word and Sacraments to the people, at the hands of the Priests of the Church, whence come the healing waters of Baptism, whereof Joel saith, "A fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley;" while we may also take it of the love and help exhibited to us on earth by the Angels and Saints of the heavenly Jerusalem.

27 GOD is the LORD, who hath showed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, yea, even unto the horns of the altar.

**AY.** He hath *showed us light*, Who is Himself "the Day-spring from on high that hath visited us," Who is the True Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. And as the first reference here is undoubtedly to the deliverance of Israel out of the darkness of bondage, so we may see in it

**S. LUKE I. 78.**

earlier in the office, just after the Prayer of the Trisagion, and the choir recites it again, as part of the Tera Sanctus, before the words of Institution, while the Roman

Missal, not dissimilarly, uses it as part of the Sanctus at the end of the Preface, immediately before the Canon begins.



an allusion to the glory of Easter, the "splendour-bearing Adam. Victorin.  
day." So Adam sings, with many another hymnodist:

The Light of CHRIST the LORD hath shone,  
The Light renowned, the Light but one,  
The Light of light, the light of glee,  
The Light of endless radiancy.

The Se-  
quence,  
*Lux illiusi  
dominice.*

He hath given us the HOLY GHOST, to shine with sevenfold D. C.  
rays in our hearts, He hath given us His Word, to be a  
lantern unto our feet, He hath given us wisdom to see clearly  
the way of salvation, He hath given us His sacraments of  
illumination, "and of His fulness have all we received, and S. John i.  
grace for grace." Bind the sacrifice with cords. The He- 16.  
brew is more exactly כִּנִּי, the festival itself, taken to mean  
the festal victim, as it is also in Exodus xxiii. 18, and is so  
translated by LXX. and Vulgate. Some difficulty arises  
from the following words, unto the horns of the altar, for  
there is no evidence that the victims were fastened there in  
any such wise. Consequently, the Chaldee explains the Targum.  
phrase as meaning, Bind the victim, and bring it bound to  
the altar, on whose horns its blood is then to be sprinkled.  
It is not impossible, however, that the phrase may be figura-  
tive, and mean, "Bind up your festival with religious asso-  
ciations, especially with acts of sacrifice, and do not make it  
a piece of mere worldly rejoicing." The LXX. and Vulgate,  
agreeing with Symmachus and S. Jerome, interpret the  
words somewhat differently, Set up the festival with densi-  
ties (συνάψουσιν, condensis) that is, with "shady boughs," as  
the Douay version has it, thickly-twined leafy branches  
(S. Hieron. frondosis) adorning the Temple throughout its  
courts and wreathing the victims also; obviously under-  
standing the passage to refer to the Feast of Tabernacles.  
The difficulty in the way of accepting this view is that while  
עֲבָתִים, meaning simply "twists," might stand for twined  
branches as well as cords, (cf. Ezek. xix. 11; xxxi. 3, 10, 14,) it does not appear that the verb אָסַר is ever used in the  
sense of wreathing, but only in that of binding or tying.  
The commentators (some of whom read confrequentationes  
instead of condensis) explain the verse as denoting first the  
duty of Christians to assemble in crowds at the House of  
God, as well the outward and visible churches of earth, as the  
unseen shrine of inward spiritual worship: and then of shun-  
ning all sin and servile work, but persevering in the thick  
abundance of good works. We should come as far as the  
horns of the altar, by remaining to receive the Blessed Sacra-  
ment of CHRIST's Body and Blood, instead of contenting our-  
selves, like too many, with going away in the middle of the  
service just after the Gospel, as an expositor writing at the  
beginning of the sixth century warns his readers. We ought

Genebrar-  
dus.

A.  
S. Prosper.

S. Bruno  
Carth.  
Rapert.  
C.



Alcuin.

not to be content, observes another of a somewhat later day, with the mere *altar*, but with the *horn of the altar*, for as the horn in Holy Writ is the emblem of strength and power, so here it means for us the virtue of the Blessed Sacrament, for the bare act of Communion is of no profit, nay, is harmful to unworthy recipients, and we should therefore so prepare ourselves as to obtain not the Sacrament only, but its benefits. Yet again, as the Cross is CHRIST's altar, so we keep our feast-day at its horn when we conform ourselves to His Passion, in order that we may keep a better festival in the time of the open vision; when we behold that other horn of the altar, the exaltation in heaven of His Godhead, whose Manhood is our altar and sacrifice on earth.

Honorius.

28 Thou art my God, and I will thank thee : thou art my God, and I will praise thee.

D. C.

S. John xx.  
28.

This is the confession of the faithful soul which believes in the verity of CHRIST's Resurrection, saying to Him, like Thomas, "My LORD and my GOD." As GOD, He is entitled to awe and worship, but in that we have a right, each of us, to call Him *my God*, He has a dearer title to our gratitude and adoration, since He has become ours by giving Himself entirely for us and to us. *Thou art my God*, says the faithful soul, contemplating Him as He hangs dying on the Cross, and *I will thank Thee* for Thy wondrous love; *Thou art my God*, reigning in heaven, and I will praise Thee for Thy glorious majesty.

Le Blanc.

Honorius.

29 O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is gracious : and his mercy endureth for ever.

Honorius.

C.

D. C.

Hugo Card.

The Psalm ends as it begins, with the notes of praise, betokening that our life here ought to praise GOD, that we may rejoice with the Saints in chanting the endless Alleluia in the world to come. It begins and ends with CHRIST, the Alpha and Omega, Whom we should praise at every time, doing all to the honour of His Name, confessing ourselves to be miserable sinners both at the very beginning of our strivings to lead a holy life, and when we have reached the close of our mortal pilgrimage, and ascribing to Him alone the thanks and praise Who giveth us the victory.

Wherefore :

Glory be to the FATHER, Whose mercy endureth for ever; glory be to the SON, the Corner-stone, the King that cometh in the Name of the LORD; glory be to the HOLY GHOST, the LORD Who hath showed us Light.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.



## COLLECTS.

O most merciful God, consolation of our troubles, Who <sup>Ladolph.</sup> bedewest the tabernacles of the righteous with joy and gladness, exalt Thy Church with the power of Thy mighty right hand, that it may become the gate of righteousness, and so bind itself together with the steadfast corner-stone as to shine with glory in Thy Resurrection. (5.)

The enemies, encompassing Thy soul, O CHRIST the LORD, <sup>Mozarabic.</sup> rushed angrily upon Thee, like bees upon a honeycomb, <sup>Passiontide.</sup> when in the time of Thy Passion they blazed out against Thee like fire among thorns. And we therefore beseech Thee, have regard to the prayer of Thy Church, and take the bloody sword out of the hand of the cruel enemy, that he may feel himself to be struck down by Thy weapon, when he knoweth the doctrine of Thy faith to be preached by those whom he had held captive. (11.)

O God, strength and praise of the faithful, grant us increase of holiness in Thy salvation, exalt us with Thy right hand in good things, that Thou mayest open to us the gates of righteousness, and we entering therein, may with the righteous evermore give thanks unto Thee. (1.)

D. C.

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